SIX

ESSAYS

UPON

THEOLOGICAL,

To which are added two upon

MORAL, SUBJECTS.

I. UPON THE SCRIPTURE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD TRUTH.

II. UPON THE NATURE OF REVELATION.

III. UPON THE CURSE MENTIONED GAL. III. 13.

IV. UPON THE DIVINE NATURE.

V. UPON THE MODE OF REASONING ADOPTED IN DR. KNOX'S CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

VI. UPON THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL.

VII. UPON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE POWERS AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE HUMAN MIND.

VIII. UPON THE NATURE AND GROUNDS OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

In this last Essay

DR. PALEY'S NOTIONS, ADVANCED UPON THAT SUBJECT IN HIS MORAL LECTURES, IS FULLY CONSIDERED.

BY THOMAS LUDLAM, A.M.

RECTOR OF FOSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

LONDON:

SOLD BY F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
J. DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE; AND HANWELL
AND PARKER, OXFORD.

1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The candid reader, it is hoped, will excuſe the repetition of a few paſſages in the Author's former Eſſays. A regard to perſpicuity in the ſubject, and ſtrength in the reaſoning, made what, to be ſure, may be thought to require an apology, almoſt unavoidable.

ESSAY I.

UPON

THE WORD TRUTH AS USED IN THE SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When our Lord was brought before the Roman Magiſtrate, the great deſign, and only deſire of the Jews was to compaſs His death, by whatever way this might be brought about, Matt. xxvi. 59. And the more ſurely to ſucceed they invented very different charges againſt Him: ſometimes accuſing Him as an offender againſt the Roman, and ſometimes againſt the Jewiſh ſtate, Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 7. When therefore Pilate inquires of Jeſus, not, whether he was *a* king, but *the* king of the Jews, our Lord replies, "Sayeſt thou this thing of thyſelf, or did others tell it thee of me?" To this reply of Chriſt Pilate anſwers with utter contempt, "Am I a Jew?" and then further inquires what offences Jeſus had committed, for in his opinion both the Jews and their king were characters highly deſpicable: and

when, in order to ſhew this charge could neither concern the preſent *power* of the Romans, or the preſent *ſtate* of the Jews, Chriſt affirms his kingdom was not of this world, and therefore that there was no occaſion to take umbrage at this title, Pilate aſks the *general* queſtion, "Art thou *a* king then?" To this queſtion our Lord, neither aſſuming, nor rejecting the title *, anſwers, "Thou ſayeſt I am *a* king;" and then, wholly quitting this ſubject, goes on, "to *this* end was I born, and for *this* cauſe came I into the world." What end and what cauſe does Jeſus allude to in theſe words? Not that of being a king, but that of bearing witneſs to *the* truth, as plainly appears from the queſtion which Pilate immediately aſks, "What is Truth?" By bearing witneſs to the truth our Lord means the very ſame thing as he does when He ſays, Matt. v. 17. "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets, I am not come to deſtroy but to fulfil;" and he adds, "every one that is of the *truth* heareth my voice." Thoſe that were of the *truth*, were Iſraelites in whom was no guile, unaffected with the uſual Jewiſh prejudices, and who looked for redemption in Iſrael. Pilate, therefore, not at all underſtanding this anſwer of Jeſus, aſks not what is *the* truth, but in *general* what is truth? The word truth is commonly uſed in Scripture, not in its

* It has been obſerved, that the beſt interpreters reckon the Jewiſh phraſe "Thou ſayeſt" equivalent to "I am." But whether the Roman Procurator was acquainted with the peculiarity of the Jewiſh idiom, or the High Prieſt attended to it, does not clearly appear.

moſt extended ſignification as relating to all kinds of knowledge, but to *the* truth, *i. e.* the certainty of thoſe events which God had determined ſhould take place, Eph. iii. 11. according to thoſe times and ſeaſons which the Father hath thought fit to *reſerve* in His *own* power, Acts i. 7. The accompliſhment of theſe events is called κατ' ἐξοχην, the truth, in oppoſition, not to *falſehood*, but to thoſe numerous, tranſitory, and *predictive* diſpenſations, which preceded it: and it is called the truth exactly in the ſame way that the Scriptures are called THE BIBLE.

In conformity to this way of ſpeaking, we are told "The law was given by Moſes, but *grace* and TRUTH came by Jeſus Chriſt."—The law. Law means commands enforcing obedience *by* puniſhing diſobedience. For the idea of law is, that every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience receives (invariably and unalterably) a juſt recompenſe and reward, *i. e.* a juſt puniſhment; but *grace* and *truth* came, the *real* and *complete* diſpenſation of mercy (which is an arreſt of judgment, a removal of puniſhment, Col. ii. 14.) the *grace*, *i. e.* the *mercy*, as well as the *truth*, *i. e.* the reality of the Goſpel diſpenſation; ſo perfect as to leave no other atonement, no other poſſibility of eſcape from judgment: this diſpenſation of which all other diſpenſations had been only the type or ſhadow; *this grace* and *truth* came by the *peculiar* appointment of God, Eph. iii. 11. in Chriſt Jeſus; for God was in Chriſt, according to his own eternal purpoſe, reconciling all things to himſelf. So again John (Baptiſt) is ſaid to bear witneſs unto *the* truth; What

truth was that then which John bare witneſs to? What? but the great *diſtinguiſhing* truth, the grand characteriſtic of the Goſpel diſpenſation? Behold the Lamb of God, ſays he, which taketh away the ſin of the world. So our Lord tells the Jews, if ye continue in my word; if ye believe, and continue to believe what I ſay, ye ſhall know *the truth*, and the *truth* ſhall make you FREE. Free from what? Not from the Roman power, as the Jews fooliſhly thought, but free from—what Paul calls the curſe of the law (ſee Eſſay upon that ſubject), free from all condemnation, for there is no condemnation to them that are in (that believe in) Chriſt Jeſus; becauſe the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from ALL ſin. Exactly in the ſame way Chriſt prays to his Father to ſanctify his diſciples through the Truth, *i. e.* through the ſpecial œconomy of the Goſpel; and he adds, thy word is truth; namely, that word which God ſent by Jeſus Chriſt preaching peace, *i. e.* offering reconciliation, as well to them that were afar off, as to them that were nigh: that word is the word of ſalvation, the reality of thoſe good tidings; not a ſhadow or reſemblance; a mere temporary exhibition of carnal ordinances, the blood of bulls and of goats, the typical image of the things, but that better, and more enduring ſubſtance, obtained by that real and living ſacrifice, which Chriſt offered through the eternal Spirit to God, an expiation and atonement for the ſins of the whole world, that by Him whoſoever believeth ſhould not periſh, but have, not only forgiveneſs of ſins, remiſſion of guilt,

guilt, and deliverance from puniſhment, but everlaſting life. In the ſame way our Lord calls himſelf not only the way and the life, but the *truth:* the great fulfiller of all the typical and prophetical diſpenſations; and this ſame ſubject is intended by the apoſtle when he ſpeaks of knowing *the* truth *as* it is in Jeſus.

Thoſe who attentively conſider the amazing ſcheme of redemption, will find it as impoſſible to conclude from reaſon, as it is to collect from revelation, that Chriſt came to bear witneſs to *mere* human truth. For what connexion is diſcernible between ſuch *abſtract*, or *hiſtorical*, or *experimental* truth, as men can attain by the operation of thoſe faculties which God has given them, and that wonderful proviſion He has made for their everlaſting happineſs in the Goſpel diſpenſation. But further, there is not any reaſon to ſuppoſe that Chriſt came to bear witneſs even to truths, which are of *no* little importance in this wonderful ſubject. The truth, *i. e.* the *reality* of inſpiration, the *authority* of inſpired writings, and the authenticity of *tranſmitted* revelation, receive not their credibility from our Lord. To aſcertain *his* authority to the Jews, He appeals to the powers He poſſeſſed and exhibited. Had I not done amongſt them, ſays He, the works that never man did, their diſregard of me would have been blameleſs; and to aſcertain *his divine* authority, the works which I do in my Father's name (of whom ye ſay that He is your God) they bear witneſs of me, for the Father which dwelleth in me (whoſe power continually dwelleth in

me), He doeth the works. In this caſe our Lord does not bear witneſs of himſelf, John v. 31. He adduces evidence to aſcertain his own character; and when this is once eſtabliſhed, he becomes a *competent* witneſs of whatever he aſſerts; for then his word, no leſs than that of the Father, is truth. Exactly in the ſame way God appeals to the effects of His own power and wiſdom exhibited in his works, Iſa. xl. 22; xli. 22, 23; xlv. 7, 12; xlviii. 13; Jer. x 12; xiv. 22; xxiii. 24; xxvii. 5; as a proof of His divinity in oppoſition to what are ſtyled vanities, or lying vanities, *i. e.* heathen idols, Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Kings xvi. 13, 26; Jer. viii. 19; Jonah ii. 8. God expects not that *mere* affirmation ſhould paſs for truth, though modern divines ſeem to do ſo*; any more than a revelation can be received as DIVINE, unleſs it accords with, and is confirmed by, the character of God, as collected, not from his declarations, but His actions †. It is certain our Lord had the fulleſt evidence of the truth to which he came to bear witneſs, for as no one knew (could know) the Father but the Son; ſo, what ſtill more ſhews the tranſcendent exaltation of his nature, not any knew (could know) the SON *but* the Father.

* Dr. Knox.

† See the Eſſay upon the Nature and Grounds of Moral Obligation.

ESSAY

ESSAY II.

UPON THE NATURE OF REVELATION.

MEN can receive knowledge only in *two* ways:

I. By the *uſe* of thoſe faculties God has been pleaſed to give them; or,

II. By ſuch communication from *himſelf* as he may think fit.

This latter ſort of knowledge may be either,

1. Imparted *immediately* from himſelf; or,

2. *Tranſmitted* from thoſe beings, to whom it has been *ſo* imparted.

When God imparts ſuch knowledge to men as they CANNOT acquire by the cuſtomary uſe of their natural faculties, whether their inability ariſes from the *nature* of the knowledge itſelf, or from the *peculiarity* of their circumſtances, ſuch knowledge is ſaid to be received by revelation: for revelation means a *ſupernatural* diſcovery of truth, whether *immediate, i. e.* by *inſpiration*, or *tranſmitted, i. e.* by the *words* or *writings* of inſpired

perſons. The word revelation reſpects only the *nature* of the truth made known, not the *mode* by which it is made known. It is ſuch knowledge as could only be *received*, or *attained* by ſupernatural means under the *preſent* circumſtances of the receiver. Thus Paul received his knowledge of the inſtitution of the Lord's Supper from Jeſus himſelf, 1 Cor. xi. 23, but the other apoſtles received their knowledge of this fact through their ſenſes. It ſhould ſeem alſo, that the information afforded to Eliſha of his ſervant's improper behaviour, and perhaps the intimation to puniſh it, miraculouſly, was of a ſupernatural kind, 2 Kings v, 25, 26, 27. The *particular* nature of theſe ſupernatural means, can only be learned, from what God has *actually* done.

Of all the knowledge communicated to men, that which God vouchſafed to Moſes, ſeems to have been attended with marks of peculiar favour. The Lord is not only ſaid to have ſpoken to him face to face, Exod xxxiii. 11, and mouth to mouth, Numb. xii. 8; but alſo to have permitted him to ſee the *divine ſimilitude*; a permiſſion, it ſhould ſeem, *never* vouchſafed to *any other* human being.

When knowledge was miraculouſly imparted to the prophets, it is frequently ſaid, that "the word of God," or "the word of the Lord came to them." But it is by no means certain that this information was *always* conveyed to them by an audible voice. The word of the Lord is ſaid, 1 Kings xiii 20, to come to the lying prophet, as he, and the prophet whom he had deceived ſat together at table. Now if this word of the

Lord

Lord had been ſignified by an audible voice, he need not have denounced to the old prophet the conſequences of his diſobedience, of which it ſhould ſeem he was till that time ignorant. Nevertheſs information *not* received immediately from God, but tranſmitted through the declaration of a prophet, is ſometimes ſpoken of as if God had made ſuch declaration *vivâ voce* himſelf. Thus Solomon ſays, 1 Kings viii. 15, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael which ſpake WITH HIS MOUTH unto David my father; although the information here referred to, was not imparted to David by *God Himſelf*, but *tranſmitted* to him, through Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. vii. 5, and that in oppoſition, as it ſhould ſeem, to Nathan's private opinion.

When the prophets preface their predictions with, "thus ſaith the Lord," it means only a ſolemn demand of attention to a meſſage from God. Their *claim* to this attention, and the *authenticity* of their meſſage muſt ſtand upon *ſufficient* evidence of *their* inſpiration: *how* that was given we are not always told; neither are we told, in *what* manner the prophets received *their* inſpiration from God. All ſcripture, ſays the apoſtle, meaning by ſcripture, the *written* declarations of God's *will*, His purpoſes, and His commands, is given by inſpiration of (from) God. The word inſpiration is here uſed metaphorically. It reſpects *not* the *nature* of the truth made known, but the *way* by which it is made known; *viz.* that it is not ſuch knowledge as is acquired by the cuſtomary uſe of any natural faculty, or by reaſoning, or by *mere*

human

human information, but which is conveyed to the mind by ſome *inexplicable* operation of God Himſelf. God is alſo ſaid in Scripture to communicate knowledge in viſions, and dreams. All theſe are therefore different kinds of *divine* revelation. But this name is alſo given to that knowledge which we collect from the writings of ſuch perſons, as were inſpired, or as obtained their information, immediately from God Himſelf, it may be many ages ago, and which writings have been tranſmitted to us by the labour of many different perſons employed at different times in copying, and recopying, printing and reprinting them for our uſe. The inſpiration of the original authors, and the fidelity of thoſe who have tranſmitted their writings to us, *i. e.* the authenticity of theſe writings muſt FIRST be proved, like any other facts, by external evidence, *before* we inquire into the ſubject of them: and when the reality of the inſpiration alledged, and the authenticity of the writings aſſerted is fully proved, then the information to be received from them muſt be acquired exactly in the ſame way, as we acquire knowledge from the written information of uninſpired perſons, viz. by reading and attending to what is written, and by the cuſtomary uſe of our rational faculties. When therefore Mr. Parkhurſt obſerves, "that by the uſe of his Greek lexicon," (ſee the concluding ſentence to the preface), "a man may be enabled to read the New Teſtament in the words NOT of a *fallible*, though truly excellent tranſlation, but in thoſe of the INFALLIBLE, becauſe *inſpired* original," He knew not what is meant by inſpiration. For do not many

Chriſtians

Chriſtians of all denominations read the New Teſtament, (and perhaps by the uſe of his lexicon) in the original? And do they all agree in the meaning of it? What then becomes of its infallibility? Can inconſiſtent, or contradictory aſſertions, though collected from the words of Scripture, be infallibly true? An *inſpiration* of *words* therefore, if there is any meaning to this expreſſion, however zealouſly ſome well-meaning perſons have contended for it, would be of little uſe. For if the meaning of the words expreſſive of the ideas communicated is already known, an inſpiration of words can go no farther than the *choice* of them, from whence ariſes propriety of expreſſion: but if the ideas communicated are ſuch as are utterly ununknown, *i. e.* have no words expreſſive of them, the annexing words to them would not make them known: ſuch ideas cannot be communicated in the uſual mode of language. If ſuch knowledge is to be communicated, it muſt be in an uncommon, *i. e.* a miraculous way. Now if this is the nature of inſpiration, it is abſurd to inquire, as ſome have done, whether the inſpiration be *continual* or only *temporary*. The powers of the human mind are not altered by the nature of the knowledge received: and the human memory, would undoubtedly retain *this*, as *much* and as *long*, as it does every *other* ſort of knowledge. By attending to the nature of inſpiration we may diſcern how far the ſtyle of inſpired writers may be affected by it. The ſtyle of the Scriptures is frequently *ſublime*, but ſublimity we know depends upon the imagination; as far then as that faculty is affected by the ideas impreſſed

preſſed upon it, ſo far the ſtyle of the writer may be expected to abound in magnificent and elevated imagery. *Knowledge* then received by INSPIRATION, admits of neither error nor doubt, but knowledge received through the *medium* of language, muſt be liable to uncertainty, and miſtake.

Hence the divided and uncertain opinions of expoſitors, which the celebrated Dr. Hawker ſagaciouſly thinks he can eaſily and perfectly obviate, by a device, ſo ſubtle, it muſt certainly be his own. In page 16 of his Eſſay upon the Divinity of Chriſt, He ſays, "He is free to confeſs, that He pays *no* regard to the *divided*, and *uncertain* opinions, of the WHOLE body of commentators; it is the UNALTERABLE doctrine of Scripture, which is to be the GUIDE of (his and) our faith. Wonderful! For do not all theſe divided, and uncertain commentators, profeſs to follow the *ſame* guide? And are not their profeſſions as deſerving of regard as the Doctor's? Unleſs he chooſes to ſay with the Pope, that He is infallible. This ingenious rule for attaining the *true* ſenſe of Scripture puts one in mind of Zachary Fungus's rule, for attaining the *true* art of fencing, whereby you may fight a duel with perfect ſafety. Zachary pays no regard to the divided, and uncertain opinions of the whole body of teachers of this art, the obſervation of one ſhort and ſimple rule is, he ſays, alone ſufficient—It is only to take care to kill your adverſary, and not to be killed yourſelf.

When Paul's groundleſs prejudices againſt Jeſus were diſſipated, and his furious zeal againſt the diſciples allayed,

allayed, Acts xxvi. 9, 11, reaſon it appears reſumed her *power*, and her *authority*, 1 Tim. i. 13, 15, and attention to, and conſideration of, the acknowledged Jewiſh prophecies, ſoon convinced him of this great JEWISH truth, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. For there is no ground to ſuppoſe, that ſuch truth as St. Paul could, in common with the other diſciples, collect from the ancient prophetical predictions, John i. 41, 45; xi. 27; Matt. xvi. 16; John vi. 69; i. 49, was communicated to him *miraculouſly*. When our Lord aſked the queſtion, "Whom do men ſay that I am?" the queſtion would have been inſignificant, if his character had not been *cognizable* from His *actions*; and it was to theſe *diſtinguiſhing marks* of it, that our Lord alludes in his reply to the Phariſees, who required of him a ſign from heaven, Matt. xvi. 3; and alſo to the meſſengers of John the Baptiſt, Luke vii. 22. And as St. Paul aſcertained *this* character of Jeſus by the uſe of his reaſon, employed in attending to, and conſidering the prophecies; ſo he employed the *ſame* inſtrument to ſhew this *ſame* truth to the Jews: and it was not by appealing to his own *perſonal* inſpiration, and confirming that appeal by miracles, Rom. xv. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12; but to that more antient and acknowledged revelation, the Jewiſh Scriptures, that Paul confounded, Acts ix. 22; and Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, Acts xviii. 28: for he (Apollos) was not only an *eloquent* man, Acts xviii. 24, *i. e.* well verſed in the art of reaſoning, but equally well verſed, or, as St. Luke expreſſes it, *ib. mighty* in the Scriptures. And hence both Paul and Apollos (of whoſe

inſpiration

inſpiration we read nothing), reaſoned, Acts xviii. 4, 19, with the Jews; and by *this reaſoning opened* unto them the Scriptures. But when Paul had occaſion to enforce *ſuch* truths as could not be collected by reaſon from the Jewiſh Scriptures, he employs a very different language; for, ſpeaking of that principal doctrine of Chriſtianity the atonement, he ſays, "I delivered unto you *firſt of all*, that which I *alſo* (myſelf firſt of all) received, How that Chriſt died for our ſins."

It may ſeem not a little remarkable, that Paul (who was a SERIOUS, *i. e.* a ſincere and zealous Jew before his converſion, as he was a ſincere and zealous Chriſtian after; for he was educated in the *perfect* manner of the Law, under a Jew of the firſt character for piety and ſenſe, Acts v. 34; xxii. 3; and, after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of that religion, was a Phariſee, and zealous towards God) ſhould accuſe himſelf of *two* crimes, which it was impoſſible a ſerious Jew ſhould commit, viz. thoſe of perſecution and blaſphemy. Becauſe perſecution of all other religions, *i. e.* puniſhment for religious opinions was ſtrictly commanded in the Law of Moſes (ſee Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, vol. ii. Serm. vii), and was therefore a Jewiſh duty: and becauſe a *ſtrict* Jew, ſuch as Paul was, could ſcarcely blaſpheme; for conſcientious Jews, ſo far from uſing irreverent language towards God, were particularly careful *not* even to *mention* his name; and a *denial* of Jeſus's character of the Meſſiah was NOT blaſphemy. But when Paul's madneſs was miraculouſly cured, and reaſon had reaſſumed her power, he began

began to conſider how far he had examined the pretenſions of this new religion; and an attention to the Jewiſh prophecies (to which he had probably hitherto paid little or no regard), led to his *own* conviction, and enabled him to convince thoſe who laboured under the ſame prejudices with himſelf. And when he had received, by *inſpiration*, the *ſame* information reſpecting the *relation* in which Jeſus ſtood to God, as the Jews had received from our Lord's own mouth, John viii. 54, might then draw from the *ſame* knowledge the very *oppoſite* concluſion, that not Chriſt, but himſelf was the blaſphemer. Becauſe, from this information, the Jews were led to conſider *this* relation as a *claim* to divine worſhip, and him who aſſerted it as a *blaſphemer*, John x. 33; Lev. xxiv. 16; Deut. iv. 12; Exod. xxxiii. 20. While Paul, convinced of the truth of this relation, and having probably uſed contumelious language againſt Jeſus, as he compelled the Chriſtians to do, Acts xxvi. 11, might think *this* character to have become his *own*. Yet when this apoſtle thought proper to aſſert the divinity of Jeſus, he did not chooſe to deduce it from the Jewiſh notion, *i. e.* this relation of Chriſt to God, but from Chriſt's relation to men as the Creator and Preſerver of the univerſe, Acts xiv. 15, 17; xvii. 24, 25, 26, 28, 29; Col. i. 16; Heb. iii. 4. A truth Paul knew, and could *only* know by inſpiration, Gal. i. 16, 17.

Paul ſays he obtained mercy, 1 Tim. i. 13, inaſmuch as his conduct was the effect of ignorance and unbelief. But if his ignorance had been *involuntary*, and

and his unbelief unavoidable, he could not have had sin (*i. e.* guilt), and consequently must have been *acquitted*. He would have had *no* occasion for mercy, *i. e.* pardon.

ESSAY III.

UPON

THE CURSE MENTIONED GAL. III. 13.

THAT God, who formed the human mind, and furniſhed it with various powers for the inveſtigation of truth, and the *reception* of knowledge (1 Cor. ii. 14), can convey knowledge to it which men can attain no other way, and can ſtrengthen its various powers, none can doubt. But when ſuch knowledge is once given, the poſſeſſion of it differs not from the poſſeſſion of any other knowledge which men can acquire by the natural uſe of their intellectual faculties. It may be remembered or forgotten, and may be communicated *vivâ voce*, or by writing, juſt as any other knowledge may. But the knowledge which is communicated from God himſelf to the human mind by *immediate inſpiration*, and that knowledge which is tranſmitted from inſpired perſons to other men by the medium of language, are totally different.

All language is imperfect, becauſe the connexion between ideas and words is wholly arbitrary, and therefore the writings of inſpired perſons differ not from the writings of uninſpired perſons, as far as the imperfection of human communication is concerned. The meaning intended to be conveyed can in both caſes only be aſcertained, where it is doubtful, by the explanations of the perſons themſelves; or, when ſuch explanations cannot be obtained, collected from the application of the words uſed upon different occaſions in their writings.

When, therefore, we wiſh to underſtand the Scriptures as exactly as may be, we muſt firſt aſcertain the writer's meaning, by conſidering what ideas he annexes to his words; and if he appears to annex *different* ideas to the *ſame* word, we muſt aſcertain all theſe different ideas, by referring to the various paſſages in his writings whence we collect theſe different ideas. For theſe reaſons we can pay no regard to meanings *arbitrarily* aſſigned, or wholly *unſupported*; and it is by ſuch unauthorized interpretations that moſt of the favourite ſyſtems of the different ſects of Chriſtians are upheld. With all theſe different cautions it is ſometimes difficult to aſcertain the meaning of the inſpired writers, and it is often much more eaſy to ſhew what they do *not*, than what they *do* mean. Nor muſt this be conſidered as proving a *negative*. For in aſcertaining the relations between ideas, the diſagreement may be no leſs perceptible than the agreement.

In order to aſcertain the meaning of the verſe before

us (Gal. iii. 13), we muſt conſider the idea annexed to the word *law* by the writers of the New Teſtament. And firſt for its literal meaning.—It is uſed,

1. In the uſual and general ſenſe—for the command of a ſuperior. And,

2. Accompanied by the demonſtrative particle THE, it is very generally uſed *exegetically*, and almoſt always means the *Moſaic* law, whether *moral*, *ceremonial*, or *political:* and in this ſenſe it is *generally* OPPOSED to the Goſpel. And we obſerve,

3. That theſe words, *The law*, are never underſtood to mean the Goſpel. For whenever this expreſſion is intended to ſignify any law but that of the Jews, it is accompanied with ſome *other ſignificant* word. So we find, Rom. viii. 2, the law of the ſpirit of life—the law of ſin and death. So again, Gal. vi. 2, the law of Chriſt.

4. From its literal ſignification, the command of a ſuperior, *iſſued* by his will, and *enforced* by his power, it is metaphorically applied to the *continual* action of other powers. So we ſpeak of the law of nations. The law of nature. The laws of motion. The laws of refraction, &c. So the apoſtle calls the governing power of the appetites, the law IN his members; and the continual ſuggeſtions of the judgment and the moral principle, the law OF his mind: what was *intended* ſo to be. The *general* effect of the former he calls the law of ſin. If, therefore, we are to judge from the general analogy of the language, and we have no other method of judging in doubtful caſes, the curſe of THE LAW cannot mean the puniſhment

annexed to the violation of the Chriſtian law: and whatever may be meant by Chriſt's being made a curſe for us, in order to obtain our redemption, it cannot be underſtood of his ſuffering the penalty of *any* law. Becauſe the penalties of the Jewiſh law were temporal: the penalties of the law of nature not known: and becauſe Chriſt certainly did not ſuffer eternal damnation (ſee Eſſays by W. Ludlam, Eſſay iv. p. 90), the penalty of the Chriſtian law.

In order to underſtand clearly the apoſtle's meaning, it may be proper to conſider,

1. The nature of law in general,

2. What is meant by the curſe of a law: and

3. The nature of that law from whoſe curſe we are ſaid to be delivered.

By law I underſtand rules given for the conduct of intelligent beings, obedience to which rules is *enforced*, and diſobedience *puniſhed* by the infliction of evil. Grot. L. ii. C. xx. S. 1. Now this infliction of evil cannot, with any propriety, be called the curſe of the law; becauſe the only circumſtance which *conſtitutes* a LAW, is a *penalty annexed* to *diſobedience*. In human laws the lawgivers partake, in common with thoſe for whoſe benefit the laws are inſtituted, of the advantages ariſing from the obſervance of ſuch laws. But though the divine laws are equally inſtituted for the benefit of thoſe to whom theſe laws are given, the Divine Lawgiver reaps *no* benefit from men's obſervance of his laws, Job xxii. 3.

When the *penalty* annexed to the violation of God's commands is *explicitly*, though it may be *not* particu-

larly, declared, ſuch commands are, in the *ſtrict* ſenſe of the word, a LAW, although the benefit of their obſervance is not declared. But when the benefit annexed to the obſervance of God's commands is *alſo* declared, theſe commands are more frequently ſtyled a covenant, Deut. xxix. 12. For by a covenant we mean an agreement entered into between two or more parties for the benefit of ſome of them, Grot. L. ii. C. xii. But in *no* caſe are the *penalties* of any laws ever called the *curſe* of ſuch laws.

The prohibition given to our firſt parents was a law, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word. No mention is made of the benefits to ariſe from their obedience. The prohibition in the third commandment, where the penalty is not particularly denounced, is alſo a law. But God's declarations to the Jews reſpecting both the penalties of their diſobedience, and the rewards of their obedience, Deut. xxviii, are in the ſtrict ſenſe a covenant, and are ſo called Deut. xxix. 12.

The *teſt* of diſobedience, in the caſe of our firſt parents, was preciſe and determinate. It conſiſted in a ſingle act, which admitted not of different degrees of guilt *in itſelf*. The conditions of the covenant made with the Jews were vague and indeterminate. They conſiſted in a line of conduct that might deviate *more* or *leſs* from the rule preſcribed. Accordingly the penalty annexed to the violation of this rule, and the reward annexed to the obſervance of it, were proportional to the reſpective ſorts of conduct, Deut. xxviii. In the firſt caſe, as we ſaid, the violation admitted not of different degrees of guilt, and therefore the penalty

was *abſolute:* in the latter caſe the penalty was *not* abſolute; for though it is written, Gal. iii. 10. (as quoted from Deut. xxvii. 26), Curſed is every one that *continueth* not in *all* things which are written in the Book of the law to do them: yet it cannot mean *irrecoverably* and *irretrievably* curſed, becauſe upon repentance and amendment, that is, upon forſaking their ſins and returning to their duty, the Jews were promiſed, Deut. xxx. 3, a readmiſſion into the divine favour. But though the evil inflicted for the violation of law cannot, with any propriety, be called the curſe of it, nor is ever ſo ſtyled, yet the *quantity* of the conditions *required*, or the *rigour* with which the penalty for non-compliance with, or diſobedience to, a law is exacted, may, upon a compariſon of theſe circumſtances in different laws, be ſtyled the curſe of any particular law. Juſt as from their ſeverity Draco's laws were ſaid to be written in blood.

Nor is this reaſoning invalidated by the apoſtle's aſſertion, that Chriſt redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being *made* a *curſe* FOR *us*. He explains his own meaning immediately; becauſe, ſays he, it is written (in the Jewiſh law, Deut. xxi. 23), "curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He alludes plainly to the manner in which Chriſt was put to death, not to the *way* in which his death has its efficacy, or *how* it became available for the forgiveneſs of ſinners. He ſays nothing about the *mode* of its *operation*; about any tranſlation of guilt, any commutation of puniſhment, any ſtanding in our law-place: matters either utterly impoſſible, or utterly unintelligible. Had the Scriptures,

tures, indeed, any where ſaid ſo in plain literal terms, the caſe would have been different But human wiſdom is not divine wiſdom; nor can human explanations of Scripture paſs for divine revelation. And had not the apoſtle explained himſelf in this very clear manner, yet ſtill this curſe of hanging on a tree is not to be found amongſt the curſes denounced againſt the violators of the Jewiſh law, Deut. xxviii, which were all temporal evils. But the evils denounced againſt impenitent violators of the Chriſtian law, are the torments of hell. And it is no where clearly aſſerted in Scripture, though it is by certain divines, that the death denounced againſt Adam's diſobedience was eternal death. What the ſanctions of the law of nature are, no man can tell; ſo that if this ſtanding in our law-place had been poſſible, Chriſt did not ſtand in our law-place.

Thus then, in the preſent caſe, the apoſtle calls the Moſaic law, Gal. v. 1. a *bondage*; and Acts xv. 10. a *yoke*, which, he ſays, neither the Jews of his own time, nor their fathers, were able to bear: and he calls deliverance from theſe oppreſſive conditions the *liberty* with which Chriſt had made them *free*. And how did Chriſt deliver them from theſe oppreſſive conditions? Not by mitigating or ſuſpending the penalties of the Moſaic law: but by giving them a new law, Jer xxxi. 31, 32, 33, enforced by different ſanctions, and attended with different conditions. For thus ſays the apoſtle, "We (Chriſtians) are not under *the law*, but under GRACE, Rom. vi. 14; that is, to make ſenſe of the paſſage and the *oppoſition* perfect, not under the Jewiſh law

of *ſtrict conformity* to *every* command of God, which is the curſe quoted by the apoſtle, Gal. iii. 10; but under that more gracious law, or, to uſe Mr. Wilberforce's words (Practical View, p. 119), are become members of a *new* diſpenſation, and ſubject to a more lenient rule, which ſays, If any man ſin, we (Chriſtians) have an advocate with (God) the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for all ſins which are *truly* repented of, and not *habitually* perſevered in.—And

This is the meaning of thoſe divines who aſſert that a *ſincere* *, not an unbroken, obedience is required in the Goſpel.

Mr. Venn, indeed, with many writers of the ſame ſtamp, ſays, in his New Duty of Man, Pref. p. x. Edit. 2, "Sincerity has been long adopted into our divinity as if it was the *gracious condition* of the new covenant, in *oppoſition* to the law of PERFECT obedience;" he goes on, "It (ſincerity) is no where mentioned in Scripture as *ſuch*, being altogether a claim of *human* invention." In the ſame way Dr. Hawker, in a long note in his Eſſay upon the Holy Spirit, *defies* any one to find ſincerity in the New Teſtament. Mr. W. ſeems not to have attended to the difference be-

* Sincere obedience means *right* conduct ariſing from *right* motives. It is conſiſtent with much imperfection in the conduct, but allows of *none* in the principle. Under this notion I ſuppoſe it is that we meet with ſuch frequent and honourable mention of this virtue in Scripture Characters. See large edit. vol. ii. p. 21, 75, 275, 351, 362, 364, 379, 401. iii. 298. iv. 269, 313, 381, 390, 472, 515.

tween

tween ſincerity of perſuaſion, and ſincerity of inquiry, or ſincerity of conviction. The firſt is conſiſtent with every poſſible prejudice, and is almoſt univerſally found in really pious perſons of ALL religions from the days of St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 9, to the preſent. The latter can never exiſt without *impartial* conſideration and *unbiaſſed* judgment: qualifications to be found only in a few. But whatever ſuch writers may ſay, who, becauſe they do not find the name, cannot ſee the *thing*, unleſs we chooſe to believe Dr. Hawker and Mr. Venn in preference to St. John and St. Paul, we muſt affirm that *perfect* obedience is NOT the condition of the new covenant: ſo far from it, that the great deſign of the covenant of *grace* is to remove the difficulty, and ſoften the rigour of the law of *works*. For the new covenant admits of a *defective* obedience, or, what amounts to the ſame thing, it provides a remedy for ſin, by holding out forgiveneſs through the blood of Jeſus to repenting and believing ſinners. The law of works, or of nature, do not allow of repentance as *alone* available to the remiſſion of ſins; nothing is ſaid in the firſt, nothing can be collected from the ſecond to ſhew that it is ſo *.

Very much akin to *this* is that aſſertion of Mr. W. that Chriſtianity hath not moderated the requiſitions of

* God's law of *works* can only mean the moral law. Whether collected from the light of Nature, or that of Revelation. The ceremonial and political law were, and could only be, poſitive inſtitutions: the penalties annexed to the violation of them were temporal, Deut. xxviii, and alſo remiſſible, Deut. xxx. 3.

God's

God's law (*i. e.* His law of works), nor mitigated the rigour of its demands, or relaxed the ſeverity of divine juſtice upon account of human weakneſs. Becauſe Mr. W. does not find *expreſs* allowances of imperfect conduct, he concludes the ſtrictneſs of the law of works ſtill remains in oppoſition to the declaration of the apoſtle. Juſt ſo Mr. Venn tells us (Preface to his New Duty of Man, p. xi), juſtice MUST be ſatisfied —the law MUST be fulfilled, the law of ſtrict conformity to every command of God, ſtands in FULL force againſt us (Chriſtians); yet what is mercy but receding from the demands of ſtrict juſtice, *i. e.* diſpenſing with the penalties of the law? And what is the Goſpel, but the word of God's grace, the declaration of His mercy to ſinners, *i. e.* to thoſe who have violated his law, upon repentance and faith? Mr. W. did not conſider that *no* law can *permit* a violation of, *i. e.* a deviation from, its commands; for then repentance would not be *neceſſary*, becauſe a *permitted* violation is *no* violation at all. But the ESTABLISHER of ſuch law may not only appoint what penalties he thinks proper to the violation of his laws; he may alſo *remit* theſe penalties to what degree, or upon what conditions, he thinks fit. He cannot, to be ſure, *aſſign* the *quantity* of deviation, nor can any *premeditated* deviation be *allowed*, Rom. vi. 1; yet intentional it muſt be, to make it criminal. Mercy, from the nature of it, is, and muſt be, a favour; it cannot be founded upon RIGHT, for could offenders *claim* exemption from puniſhment, grace would be no more grace. But neither

neither Scripture nor reaſon can permit the ſubjects of mercy to determine in what *quantity*, or upon what *occaſions* or *conditions* it ſhall be extended to them. This were to take the adminiſtration of government out of the hands of the lawgiver.

Is it then improper to ſay, that what the Goſpel requires of thoſe who receive it—is—thankfully to truſt to the merits of Chriſt for the pardon of our ſins, and the acceptance of our ſincere and imperfect *repentance*, *not* of our obedience? For nothing is due, becauſe nothing is promiſed to the obedience of any created beings. When men have done ALL things (which) they are commanded, they are inſtructed to *eſteem*, and directed to *acknowledge*, themſelves unprofitable ſervants, who have only done that which was their DUTY to do, Luke xvii. 10. And is it not inconſiſtent to ſay that *perfect*, *i. e.* unbroken, obedience is the law of the new covenant; when it is acknowledged by all who ſay ſo "that there remains a continual conſciouſneſs in the moſt perfect Chriſtians of their own unworthineſs—of their many remaining infirmities, which ſo often corrupt the ſimplicity of their intentions, thwart the execution of their purer purpoſes, and fruſtrate the reſolutions of their better hours?" And is it only weakneſs and inability ſuch perſons have to lament? Paul, it ſhould ſeem, was of a different opinion. I perceive, ſays he, a law *in* my *members* warring againſt the law *of* my *mind*, ſo that *when* I would do good, evil is *preſent* with me; and the good that I *would*, that do I *not*; but the evil which I *would not*, that I DO.

ESSAY

ESSAY IV.

UPON

THE NATURE OF THE DIVINE BEING AS DISCOVERABLE FROM HIS WORKS OR HIS WORD.

By the word God I underſtand the Creator, Governor, and Preſerver of the World: and it will be found *impoſſible* to aſſign any *other* idea to this word. This is the *only* idea preſented to us in Scripture, for the inſpired writers were not ſchool divines, who indeed have furniſhed us with *many* terms, but with *little* knowledge upon this ſubject. If any ſhould ſay that this is making God to be *God* by *office* (Scripture Characters, Vol. iii. page 25 or 29), they are deſired to acquaint us, upon what *other* ground moral obligation can ſtand, than upon the *relations* interceding between *intelligent* Beings.—See the Eſſay upon the Nature and Grounds of Moral Obligation.

By the knowledge of God, then, I underſtand the knowledge of

I. His Nature,

II. His Character.

The

The knowledge of His Nature comprehends the knowledge of

I. His Powers

II. His mode of Exiſtence.

The knowledge of His Character comprehends the knowledge of

I. His Diſpoſitions,

II. His Will,

III. His intentions reſpecting his intelligent creatures.

Such knowledge of any of theſe particulars which is collected from the deductions of *reaſon* founded upon the *uſe* of our ſeveral *ſenſes*, I call NATURAL Religion.

Such knowledge as is collected from *immediate*, or *tranſmitted* revelation, I call REVEALED Religion.

By conſidering the works of creation expoſed to our ſenſes, we become acquainted with the *natural* powers of the Creator. By his natural powers I mean *ſuch* powers, the poſſeſſion of which does not depend upon his own will. For it ſeems as impoſſible that a being ſhould give *powers*, as that it ſhould give *exiſtence* to itſelf. By conſidering the *courſe* of God's works, *i. e.* by conſidering the *manner* in which His natural powers are exerted towards His creatures, and alſo the diſpoſitions which He has given to *ſuch* of them, as are endued with intelligence, we collect His moral character. For we cannot ſuppoſe he would give qualifications to his creatures, which were *offenſive* to Himſelf; that is, diſpoſitions contrary to his own; becauſe this were to ſuppoſe him to will *contradictory* effects at the *ſame* time. But as the *natural* powers of God

God cannot be ſuppoſed to depend upon his *own* will, becauſe no being can communicate to himſelf powers which he *has not*; ſo the moral diſpoſitions of God muſt be ſuppoſed to depend upon His *own* will, ſince if they were *independent* they would be *neceſſary*. But it is in the *freedom* of theſe diſpoſitions that his *rectitude* conſiſts; and from the voluntary exerciſe of his powers and diſpoſitions ariſe thoſe relations, which are the *original* of our *obligations*, and the *foundation* of our *duty*. By our obligations I mean a ſtate of mind perceiving the reaſons for purſuing a particular ſort of conduct. By our duty I mean that conduct itſelf. Theſe reaſons are either prudential or moral. Becauſe men are ſo formed by their Creator, as to *deſire* happineſs, and be *averſe* to miſery; and alſo to ſee that certain actions are right, fit, proper to be done; and certain other actions, wrong, unfit, improper to be done, or in other words, wicked, deteſtable, abominable. Prudential reaſons are founded in the *benefit* or *harm*; moral reaſons in the *rectitude* or *turpitude* of the actions, without regard to the conſequences of ſuch actions. See the Eſſay upon the Nature and Grounds of Moral Obligation.

In the ſame manner by conſidering the declarations of God made to a few perſons by *inſpiration*, or to a large number by *tranſmitted* revelation *, we become acquainted with the *relations* in which the REDEEMER and SANCTIFIER of mankind ſtand in both to God,

* See the Eſſay upon Revelation.

and

and to ourſelves *. But as in the former caſe, the *mode* of God's exiſtence, and the *degree* of the powers He is poſſeſſed of affect neither the *relations* He ſtands in to us, nor the *nature* and *degree* of our duty to Him, ſo the *mode* of exiſtence of the Son, and Holy Spirit, and the *natural* powers they may be poſſeſt of, affect *not* thoſe *relations* they ſtand in to us, or the *nature*, and *degree* of our duty to them. It is the *exerciſe* of their *natural* and *moral* powers in *reſpect* to us, and not the *mere* poſſeſſion of theſe powers, from which our obligations ariſe. But the *degree* of our obligations, and the *extent* of our duty depend upon the degree of the diſpoſitions exerciſed towards us, Luke vii. 47. And thus the LOVE of God (manifeſted in the benefits conferred upon us by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt) which paſſeth knowledge, calls for every poſſible return of gratitude, affection, and obedience, that we are capable of. We are therefore highly concerned in ALL thoſe circumſtances, which ſhew the *greatneſs* of the divine kindneſs, and regard, of the divine pity, and mercy to us. But we are not at all concerned in the *particular* degree of power Chriſt may poſſeſs, or in the *manner* by which He became poſſeſſed of it. It is fully ſufficient for us to *know*, upon the authority of revelation, Matt. xxviii. 18, that He is actually poſſeſſed of all power, and that He is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt, them that come unto God by Him, Heb. vii. 25. Whether this

* See Butler's Analogy, P. II. Ch. ii. S. 2.

power,

power, and this ability were *given* unto Him, or not, is none of our concern. His kindneſs is not the leſs voluntary, or valuable, from whatever ſource his power of conferring it may be derived, or whether it be wholly underived.

But though the moral character of the Creator, Governor, and Preſerver of the world, as diſcoverable from the conſequences of His actions, *is* and MUST be the *teſt* of the *truth* of all tranſmitted revelation (for original revelation, *i. e.* inſpiration, needs no teſt; it muſt carry its evidence along with it); yet when the truth of tranſmitted revelation is *once* eſtabliſhed, neither the doctrines * conveyed in it, nor the relations diſcovered by it, are ſubjects for the *diſcuſſions* of human *reaſon*, or the *deciſions* of human *judgment*. And if progreſſive diſcoveries are made in progreſſive diſpenſations †, the revealer may ſuit his diſpenſations to the degree of information given in each. Thus the Chriſtian revelation acquaints us with the relations and offices of Beings *undiſcoverable* by human reaſon from the works of God, and *undiſcovered* in any of His prior revelations; and therefore the *ſame* BEING, who in the Jewiſh diſpenſation reſtrained the worſhip of that people to ONE object, "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY ſhalt thou ſerve," may, with EQUAL RIGHT and EQUAL REASON, extend the nature of this worſhip, and ſay to thoſe under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, that He willeth, and has appointed all men to honour the

* See the Eſſay upon the Application of Experience to Religion, page 41.

† See the Eſſay upon Enthuſiaſm and Fanaticiſm, page 83,

Son, EVEN AS they honour the Father. Becauſe He who directed the nature and mode of the patriarchal and Jewiſh worſhip, has certainly EQUAL RIGHT, and EQUAL AUTHORITY, to direct the nature and mode of the chriſtian worſhip. And He who, for the wiſeſt reaſons, no doubt, thought fit to wink at the times of ignorance, might juſtly call and command all men every where to repent, when he has made known unto them that he hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteouſneſs.

The Scriptures of the New Teſtament inform us that Jeſus is the SON of GOD. Yet theſe words cannot poſſibly be ſo underſtood, as if Jeſus was the Son of God in the *ſame* way by *which* every man-child born into the world is the ſon of his father. Chriſt is not, becauſe he CANNOT be the Son of God in the literal ſenſe of the word according to all human acceptation; and in ſubjects, where, from the ſcantineſs and imperfection of our underſtandings, what little knowledge we have, muſt of *neceſſity* be principally conveyed by metaphor, it becomes us to be exceedingly careful, that we do not miſtake metaphorical expreſſions for literal, nor literal for metaphorical expreſſions. It is a known rule of interpretation, that when words are literally impoſſible, or, what is juſt the ſame thing, unintelligible in the literal application of them, they muſt be underſtood, if they are to be underſtood at all, figuratively. For words which convey *no* meaning, are juſt the ſame as *no* words at all. What work divines have made for want of attending to the *proper* uſe of words (and that is the PROPER uſe of them which

which renders them CLEARLY intelligible), may be ſeen in every one of thoſe controverſies which have haraſſed the Chriſtian church for near ſeventeen hundred years.

Thus, then, in the preſent caſe, the very imperfect ſimilitude conveyed by this metaphor, may nevertheleſs afford us much, and very important information. For had our Lord only been *ſtyled* through the whole Scriptures, what he is called in two places, the Angel of His preſence, or the Meſſenger of the Covenant, we might, it is true, have conſidered him as the moſt exalted of the angelic ſpirits; but *this* notion would have fallen very ſhort of that dignity and importance which belong to Jeſus: for now we *know*, that he is far ſuperior to any of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits; becauſe to which of the angels ſaid He at any time, "thou art MY Son, this day have I begotten thee?" The firſt then, and *principal* idea of a ſon, implies *derived* exiſtence. For if the metaphor *can* be ſuppoſed *not* to hold in its moſt *important* circumſtance, no one can tell HOW, and WHY to apply it in all the reſt. Indeed, whatever may be the *nature* of this unintelligible relation, our Lord Himſelf ſeems to point ſtrongly to this *leading* feature of the metaphor, John v. 26. whatever may be meant by having life in himſelf. But though it is impoſſible for us to underſtand the *preciſe* nature of this relation when applied to God, yet we may collect many important conſequences from this very important relation; juſt as though we can by no means underſtand the *manner* in which God created the world, yet we can underſtand many important

conſequences of creation. And *this relation* of *derived* exiſtence is always conſidered as the *ground* of all that love and affection which intercede between a father and a ſon; and conſequently of all thoſe advantages, and that connexion of intereſts, which all perſons naturally, and therefore juſtly, eſteem the inſeparable attendants of this relation. In conformity to this idea, we read that the Son's power, and glory, and dominion, were GIVEN unto Him by the Father. When, then, we alſo read that God gave up to ſufferings and to death, not only his *own*, but his *only begotten* Son, that we might receive the forgiveneſs of ſins, and the adoption of ſons, we may ſee the ſtrength of the apoſtle's reaſoning, Rom. viii. 32, in its *full* force. For *this* circumſtance is always conſidered as highly increaſing that love and affection, and regard, on the *ſide* of a parent. And wherefore, but to increaſe the trial of Abraham, does God ſay, "Take now thy ſon, thine ONLY ſon? Are then the human affections raiſed to their higheſt pitch when they reſpect a beloved and an only child, one whoſe filial obedience, whoſe dutiful conduct, whoſe attentive behaviour, has uniformly and conſtantly demanded all poſſible approbation, whoſe greateſt happineſs, the comfort and ſupport of whoſe whole life it has always been to comply with the inclinations, and contribute to the wiſhes of a parent? Who would think any thing too much to do, or to ſuffer for ſuch a child? And muſt we not apply the reaſoning of the pſalmiſt, Pſa. xciv. 9, 10, in this caſe? And muſt we not be convinced that the arguments of inſpired perſons in matters of religion, carry with them

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the *united* authority of human reaſon, and divine revelation? Can we imagine that God, who implanted theſe workings of reaſon and affection in the minds of his creatures, is devoid of them himſelf (ſee page 30); or can we imagine that He who is love itſelf, muſt not *feel* for this Son in whom He ſo *repeatedly* and *miraculouſly* declares Himſelf WELL PLEASED? Go, then, and attribute to that God whoſe tender mercies are over all His works, and whoſe compaſſions, ſo far from failing, that they reach even the brute creation, and are aſſigned by Himſelf as a reaſon for ſparing that great city Nineveh: go and attribute to that God the more than ſavage brutality of the Roman ſoldiers. Go and ſay *this* God could behold with COMPLACENCY, with PLEASURE, with DELIGHT, the extreme ſufferings and dying anguiſh of that Son, whoſe meat and whoſe drink it was to do the will of His Father: and all this, becauſe certain divines muſt needs explain the *wiſdom* of God by the *fooliſhneſs* of man; becauſe they cannot acquieſce in the *naked* declarations of Scripture, unleſs *they* may be allowed to *aſſign* the REASONS why God thought fit to waſh away the guilt of ſinners in the blood of the innocent; though men are utterly UNABLE to diſcover, and God has not thought proper to give any *.

Exactly

* Not only the affections aſcribed to God in Scripture, are frequently improperly underſtood by theſe divines, ſuch as the Scriptures make no mention of, or furniſh the ſtrongeſt reaſons for ſuppoſing, that they have NO place in the divine mind, have been boldly attributed to God, in order to favour an *abſurd*, and

Exactly in the *ſame* way, and for exactly the *ſame* reaſon, the different powers of God (of which it is impoſſible

unfounded explanation of that capital doctrine, the atonement. The ſins of mankind are ſuppoſed to be transferred (imputed is the *ſcholaſtic* term, for the Scriptures ſpeak NOT of any ſuch tranſlation of *guilt*, (See Eſſays by W. Ludlam, Eſſay iv. On the Doctrine of Satisfaction) to Jeſus. And were ſuch tranſlation poſſible, the word character could *not* poſſibly have any idea affixed to it, or be capable of any ſignification. For character is, and muſt be perſonal; it ariſes, and can ONLY ariſe from the conduct of the *individual*; and can no more be transferred or imputed to him than the actions, or conſciouſneſs of *one* man, can be made the actions or conſciouſneſs of *another* man. To ſupport this abſurd, and impoſſible notion, the ſufferings of Chriſt are called by thoſe who maintain it, what they *never* are called in Scripture, a *puniſhment*, though they neither had, nor could poſſible have, any thing but pain in common with puniſhment, if we have any ideas to our words, and God is ſpoken of as being *pleaſed with, delighting in, receiving complacency* from, the pain and ſufferings of His only begotten, and, as He more than once declared in a *miraculous* manner, WELL BELOVED Son, in whom He was WELL PLEASED. And we are told by Mr Wilberforce, as a *confirmation* of this groundleſs notion, in a note page 333, "that it has been WELL remarked that the word uſed, where it is ſaid that God was pleaſed to bruiſe, and put to grief his only Son for us, is the SAME word as that, wherein (by which) it was declared by a voice from Heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed." This remark, *whoever made* it, is both *falſe* and *fooliſh*. It is falſe, *i. e.* it has no foundation, becauſe the word uſed in every paſſage of the New Teſtament, where this declaration is made, is *uniformly* εὐδοκέω, and this word does *not* once occur in the 53d chapter of Iaiah, which is the part of the Old Teſtament alluded to: and it is fooliſh, becauſe the Septuagint tranſlation of the Jewiſh Scriptures is *no* confirmation of the meaning of the inſpired writers of the Chriſtian Scriptures, unleſs *they themſelves* quote

impoſſible we ſhould have any clear and adequate conception, becauſe He is a Spirit, and of ſpirits we have, and can have *only* negative ideas *), are ſet forth to us in Scripture under the ſemblances of corporeal powers, with which we are familiar: and He is repreſented as receiving His knowledge through corporeal organs, as *ſeeing* and *hearing*; as exerting his power after the manner of men, by the uſe of *hands* and *arms*; as being capable of human poſtures, as *ſitting* and *ſtanding*; as having *like* paſſions, and affections, as being *angry*, as *hating*, as *repenting*, as *jealous* of his honour, and *tenacious* of his glory. Matters equally *impoſſible* and *improper* to be underſtood in the *literal* ſenſe of the words; and ſpoken only in condeſcenſion to the narrow bounds, and ſcanty powers of the human underſtanding: or, in conſideration of the *peculiar* circumſtances, and ſituation of the Jews †. And they who

quote it as ſuch, and *then* the comment ſtands upon *divine* authority. Becauſe the Engliſh tranſlation has the word *pleaſed*, this ſagacious remarker cannot ſee the difference between *fit, proper, right*, and *acceptable, grateful, agreeable, pleaſant*. Yet can we, is it poſſible to, ſuppoſe, that God, who declares in the moſt *ſolemn* manner, that He has NO PLEASURE in the execution of judgment, which the Scripture informs us is his *ſtrange*, his unacceptable work, in the *deſerved* ſufferings of ſinners for their offences, ſhould take *pleaſure* in the pains and agonies of him who had committed NO ſin, and againſt whom not even the ſhadow of an accuſation could be found!

* See the Eſſay upon Enthuſiaſm and Fanaticiſm.

† Divine Wiſdom having thought proper to appoint the Jew-

who apply *literally* ſuch circumſtances to God, as have their foundation in the *particular* nature, or ſituation of men, may well be ſaid, in the words of the philoſopher, and the pſalmiſt, *humana ad Deos transferre*, or to think God ſuch an one as themſelves. For is it poſſible that the Supreme Being, infinitely exalted above all created excellence, that the ſovereign Lord of all, ſhould be *deſirous* of honour, or *fond* of applauſe? What addition to His happineſs can ariſe from the ſervice of His creatures? What increaſe to His glory from the opinions, the praiſes, the adorations of men? It can *only* be for *our* ſakes, that He will permit the worſhip of *no* other object, and that He will not give His glory to another. Human creatures may covet reſpect, honour, applauſe, from weak

iſh nation to be the repoſitory of that wonderful diſpenſation, Rom. ix. 4, 5, by which God, from all eternity, determined, Eph. iii. 11, to gather together in one all things in Chriſt, whether they be things in heaven, or things on earth, Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20: and having determined that this diſpenſation ſhould have its foundation in the MESSIAH *character* of our Lord, it was highly conſonant to that wiſdom to remove all circumſtances to a diſtance which had any tendency to ſhake this foundation, by rendering the reality and certainty of this character doubtful. Every care, therefore, was taken to preſerve the Jewiſh œconomy (and which was indeed a perpetual prophecy of Chriſtianity) pure and unmixed: and, as ſeparation from the heathen was the plaineſt as well as the moſt efficacious means of attaining this end, attention to prevent ALL *intercourſe*, whether of commerce or religion (the two great inſtruments of intercommunity), is ſtrongly ſhewn in the ſtrict prohibition of USURY and *polytheiſm*.

men like themſelves, but what can the hallelujahs of the whole hoſt of Heaven add to divine greatneſs? Poſſeſſed of unerring wiſdom, and unlimited power, the Almighty has no foes to fear, no appetites to importune, no paſſions to pervert him. All-ſufficient in Himſelf, He can receive no acceſſion from without. Yet He who was in the beginning with God, and who *was* God, expreſſes his deſire of being re-admitted in his *aſſumed* condition, and character of man, to that glory which He enjoyed before the world was, in His *primæval* ſtate of the only begotten of the Father, John xvii. 5. And what wonder, if the inconceivable dignity and happineſs implied in being in the BOSOM of the FATHER, that tranſcendent honour, John viii. 54, belonging to Him, (as the brightneſs of His Father's glory, and the expreſs image of His perſon, as the ſharer of his throne, Rev. iii. 21; the partner of His counſels, John v. 20; the ſupreme object of his love, John iii. 35; v. 20), and therefore demanded as his due, Heb. i. 6, and required of the bleſſed inhabitants of Heaven—thoſe THRONES and DOMINIONS, and PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS: what wonder that *ſuch* happineſs, and *ſuch* honour, ſhould be an object of deſire to that Son, who, though of many brethren the *firſt* born, was amongſt them all the ONLY BEGOTTEN! But the glory which Chriſt had with the Father *before* the world was, and which is the object of His prayer, John xvii. 5, could not be the glory which the *apoſtles beheld*, and which John ſays, i. 14, was *as* the glory of the only begotten of the Father. For whether the apoſtle alludes to his glorious power of working

working miracles, John xv. 24, his glorious character of grace and truth; *i. e.* his love of mercy, and his fulfilling (the types and ſhadows of) the law, and the (predictions of the) prophets: that reality, which under the name of *truth*, was ſet in oppoſition to the types and emblems of *it*; or whether the apoſtle alludes to that glorious appearance of our Lord at His tranſfiguration; ALL theſe were *glories* of his *incarnate* ſtate, and could not be the glories He poſſeſſed before the world was, *i. e.* before the creation of *that* nature of which he took part, Heb. ii. 14. And that *this* prayer was granted we learn from St. Paul, who tells us, that for the ſuffering of death He was crowned with glory and honour: God having, for THIS reaſon, highly exalted Him, and ſet Him at His own right hand, not only giving Him a name which is above every name, but making angels, and principalities, and thrones, and dominions, and powers, ſubject unto him, and in this ſtate he ſhall continue till all things ſhall be ſubdued unto Him, when he ſhall again reſume his original ſtate of glory, that of the ONLY BEGOTTEN Son of God; for in that ſtate He was was *with* God, John i. 18; xvii. 5; and in that ſtate, it is to be preſumed, He was God, Phil. ii. 6.

The goſpel affords information to us which *no* powers of our own reaſon are able to diſcover from the *works* of God, or to *collect* from any of His former revelations: it acquaints us with the mutual relations interceding between God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as well as with thoſe in which they ſtand to us; and it further informs us, that in this wonderful

diſpenſation

diſpenſation of GRACE, we are likewiſe indebted to yet another divine being called in Scripture the Holy Ghoſt, or the Holy Spirit, and ſometimes the Spirit of *the* truth, John xiv. 17; xv. 26; xvi. 13; 1 John iv. 6. To whom, with the Father and the Son, all Chriſtians are commanded to be ſolemnly dedicated at their baptiſm: by whom alone any can acknowledge Chriſt as their Saviour; for no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt: and by whom, in conjunction with the Father and the Son, all true Chriſtians are ſolemnly bleſſed, according to that inſpired benediction, The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all. And which things we may well ſuppoſe the apoſtle ſpoke, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth.

Of the nature of this bleſſed Spirit, that is of the mode of his exiſtence, and of the relation in which He ſtands to the Father and the Son, very little is told us in Scripture, from which alone men can receive information upon theſe ſubjects. Of the tranſcendant dignity of His character, of the high importance of His various offices in the great and gracious work of redemption, we have more copious information. He is able to *ſearch* the *deep* things of God: ſo exalted is the nature of his knowledge, that communication ſeems unneceſſary. Of Himſelf, by *His own* powers he *ſearcheth, i. e. examineth* into the *deep* things of God, into thoſe ſecrets of the divine mind, which, it may be, are not known even to the Son; for ſuch our Lord

Himſelf

Himſelf has told us that there are, Mark xiii. 32; and He diſcerneth the hidden counſels of the moſt High, with a clearneſs and facility equal to that with which the ſpirit of a man, which is in him, knoweth the things of a man: that is, the Holy Spirit receiveth not his knowledge, like the Son, from the Father, for the *Father ſheweth* the *Son all* things that himſelf doth, John v. 20. But the Holy Spirit ſearcheth, by *his own* power and wiſdom, the *deep* things of God. They are not ſaid to be ſhewn him, but himſelf examineth; for to ſearch is to examine; and in conſequence he knoweth them as a man knoweth the ſubjects which paſs through his own mind; that is, he is conſcious of the divine knowledge as a man is conſcious of human knowledge. For this conſciouſneſs attends only that knowledge which we perceive by the diſcerning faculties of our own minds, whether it be the faculties of our ſenſes, or thoſe of the underſtanding. When we receive knowledge by (human) information, be the information ever ſo exact, we are not conſcious that we know *this* truth; we are only conſcious that we give *credit to it*, that we *believe* it. But here lies the difference. Matters of *information* (*i. e.* belief) MAY be *falſe*; matters of *knowledge* MUST be true. By this Spirit future events were revealed to the prophets: By this great Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation—He is ſaid to ſpeak by Eſaias the prophet, Acts xxviii. 25. St. Peter tells us that prophecy was no human device, but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt: and this ſame Spirit was ſaid to ſpeak in the apoſtles, Mark xiii. 11, no leſs than in the prophets,

phets, and in the ſame manner to ſhew unto them things to come, John xvi. 13.

But though the Holy Spirit ſearcheth the deep things of God, it is the deep things *of God* which are the objects of his ſearch: for this amazing diſpenſation was according to God's *own* eternal purpoſe, which He purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus, and therefore we are told that the Spirit ſpeaketh *not* OF HIMSELF, but whatſoever *he ſhall hear* that ſhall he ſpeak, and he glorifies the Saviour by *receiving* the wondrous traits of the Redeemer's character, and being the great inſtrument of revealing them, as the Spirit of Truth, to mankind; and thus he ſheds abroad the love of God in their hearts. And as the Holy Ghoſt was not only directly concerned in the *general* eſtabliſhment of the Goſpel, as the more immediate author of the inſpired knowledge, and the miraculous powers beſtowed upon the prophets and firſt Chriſtians; he is alſo repreſented as the enlightener, the comforter, and ſanctifier, of all ſuch as ſincerely deſire to embrace the goſpel of grace: and his *particular* influence upon the minds of believers is not leſs important than his miraculous agency in the general eſtabliſhment of this wonderful diſpenſation; and he is expreſsly ſent by the Father and the Son to forward this work of mercy in the minds of all who, from a ſenſe of their ſituation, are inclined to receive the Redeemer and accept his ſalvation. Qualified by his perfect knowledge of the things of God, and diſpoſed by the love he beareth to poor fallen man, for he maketh interceſſion for penitent and believing ſinners with groanings that cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26,

that

that is, with an earneſtneſs and intenſity of mind which no words can expreſs, he helpeth our infirmities, aſſiſteth thoſe natural weakneſſes, which may indeed be much lamented as impediments to the proper diſcharge of our duty, but of themſelves cannot be repented of as ſins: he exciteth our deſires, and ſtrengtheneth our reſolutions of holineſs, by ſhedding abroad the love of God in our hearts: and this he does by bringing to our minds and recalling to our memories the numerous inſtances of the divine goodneſs, evinced by the manifold benefits we have received from God: by ſetting before us the greatneſs and multiplicity of our obligations, the ſmallneſs of our deſert, and the little reaſon we have to expect his favour; for love *only does*, it *only can*, ſpring from love; and therefore we love, and *ought* to love, him, becauſe he firſt loved us. Thus the Holy Spirit changes the character, the temper, the diſpoſitions of a man; not as a dyer changeth the colour of his garments by a ſudden and irreſiſtible operation, but by the effects of thought and conſideration, by ſtrengthening that which is weak, ſupplying that which is wanting, encouraging that which deſponds; by ſtrengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees, to ſpeak with the prophet: and by thus acting upon the different powers and diſpoſitions of our minds, and as it were dwelling within us, for we are aſſured that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, we become fit reſidences of this divine gueſt here, and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints hereafter.

As

As the *operations* of the Holy Spirit in the communication of knowledge appear to have been *different*, ſo we may diſcern a wonderful propriety in this diverſity of his operations, according to the nature of the knowledge communicated. When the Spirit revealed ſuch truths to the prophets and apoſtles as no human abilities could diſcover; whether theſe truths reſpected the exiſtence of future events, or the nature of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, this knowledge ſeems to have been poured into their minds in a manner of which we have no conception. It ſhould ſeem that it could not poſſibly be acquired, as Dr. Doddridge is inclined to ſuppoſe (ſee his Diſſertation upon Inſpiration, Family Expoſitor, 4to. vol. iii), by what he calls a *miraculous* improvement, that is, by increaſing the powers of the human faculties. For we have no reaſon to imagine that a power of foreſeeing *particular* events, or of diſcovering *particular* truths, could have been beſtowed conſiſtently with the *preſent* nature of the human underſtanding. Becauſe our intellectual powers ſeem not to be limited with reſpect to the *kind* of knowledge they are capable of attaining: and therefore the power which enabled a prophet to foreſee one event, or an apoſtle to diſcover one truth, muſt, if we reaſon from the mode of action obſervable in the human faculties, have enabled perſons, under ſuch a ſort of inſpiration, to have foreſeen all events, and to have diſcovered all truths of the *like* kind. Whereas the information afforded by the inſpiration of the Holy Spirit ſeems only to have reſpected *particular* events, or *particular* truths;

nor

nor does it appear that the prophets or apoſtles ever received *general* knowledge. It is in alluſion to *this* mode of information that the apoſtles are told the Spirit ſhould TEACH them all things, *i. e.* all neceſſary things. But when the knowledge vouchſafed was owing not to immediate information conveyed to them by ſome inexplicable manner, but was to be attained by their own powers, in conſequence of his influence upon their diſpoſitions, by which they were induced to attend to truths hitherto miſtaken through prejudice, or diſregarded from want of conſideration, or forgotten through unavoidable defect of memory: then the Holy Spirit is ſaid to LEAD (ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς) into all *the* truth, or to bring all things (which they had forgotten) to their remembrance, John ii. 17, 22; xii. 16; and thus the Holy Ghoſt may be ſaid to open their underſtanding to underſtand the Scriptures, as our Lord himſelf did, Luke xxiv. 45. This latter mode of the operation of the Holy Spirit is more analogous to the natural operations of the intellectual faculties, and reſembles more nearly what is commonly called his *ordinary* operations, in contradiſtinction to his more rare, and, if we may ſo ſpeak, *more* miraculous, *i. e.* his extraordinary, operations. Yet ſuch is the awful character of this Holy Being, that it becomes us to contemplate our happineſs in having ſuch an helper in the great work of our ſalvation with fear and trembling; always remembering, that though our Redeemer ſubmitted to the contradiction, the deriſion, the taunts, the inſults, the mockery of ſinners; yet ſuch is the

dignity

dignity of this great Spirit, that any ſlight put upon Him who is fearful in holineſs muſt aſſuredly be at the hazard of our everlaſting happineſs. Whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall (upon repentance) be forgiven him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

ESSAY V.

UPON

THE NATURE OF HUMAN AUTHORITY, CONSIDERED AS A PROOF OF THE TRUTH OF OPINIONS, CONTAINING REMARKS UPON DR. KNOX'S CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

RELIGION can alone concern INTELLIGENT BEINGS, *as far* as it reſpects a knowledge of the *nature* and *diſpoſitions* of God; and FREE BEINGS, as far as it reſpects obedience to His commands: for why talk of religion to ſuch beings as cannot underſtand it? or why exhort thoſe to obedience who have no power over their own actions? Nobody thinks of preaching to horſes. By intelligent beings I underſtand ſuch beings as poſſeſs the powers of reaſon; becauſe the poſſeſſion of ſuch powers carries with it an *obligation* to *uſe* them: for to what *other* purpoſe can they be given? It muſt of neceſſity, therefore, be at their *own* peril whether the poſſeſſors of ſuch powers will uſe, or forbear to uſe them, Ezek. ii. 5. But if intelligent beings are alone capable of religion, it can only be becauſe *reaſon* is the *ſine quâ non*, the requiſite qualification

through which religion can exiſt. Such perſons, therefore, as reject the application of reaſon to religion, do in fact make religion utterly impoſſible: and if reaſon is to be uſed in religious ſubjects, then, *as far* as any matter is unintelligible, *ſo far* it cannot be any part of religion. Whatever cannot be underſtood is ſo far nothing. Words which convey *no* ideas are juſt the ſame as *no* words. Care, therefore, to examine what *can* and what *cannot* be underſtood, is the firſt duty of ſuch as deſire to avail themſelves of this important ſubject. A knowledge of the NATURE, DISPOSITIONS, and WILL of God, muſt be neceſſary for *acceptable* obedience to Him; and *ſuch* an obedience as *He requires* muſt be neceſſary for *our* happineſs. The truth of the firſt of theſe propoſitions is ſelf-evident; the truth of the ſecond may be collected from the goodneſs of God as diſplayed in His works. But divines ſeldom *ſettle* ideas, though nothing would ſo effectually contribute to the propagation of truth, the advancement of knowledge, and the total prevention, or ſpeedy termination, of differences in opinion, as an endeavour in the diſputants to aſcertain, with *preciſion*, their *own* and their *adverſaries* meaning. Had thoſe who firſt varied from each other in important ſubjects (and vary men will if they think at all), inſtead of referring their differences (as was formerly the cuſtom) to public diſputations, which only raiſed up a tribe of *Logomachiſts*, or engaging in written controverſy, which ſerved but to promote the pitiful arts of Polemic writers, *ſettled* their *meanings* between themſelves, we ſhould probably have had ALL the benefits, and little or none of the miſ-

chiefs,

chiefs, of controverſy, which thoſe who have ſyſtems to maintain are always ſo terribly afraid of and ſo much decry. Controverſy, to be ſure, has been much abuſed, and too often improperly carried on; but the abuſe of any thing, ſays a reſpectable author *, is no argument againſt the RIGHT uſe of it. What have been more abuſed than God's two moſt important gifts, reaſon and revelation? Yet are they on this account generally hurtful? Thoſe who have attended to the *nature* of the human mind know that controverſy *may* be; thoſe who have attended to the information of *hiſtory* know that it *has actually* been exceedingly uſeful. They know that there is hardly any other way of coming at the truth in ſuch a ſubject as religion. A ſubject whoſe difficulty requires the cleareſt diſcernment in the underſtanding, the utmoſt coolneſs in the temper, and the moſt perfect freedom from ſyſtem. Under ſuch qualifications the objections of infidels have called forth the ableſt defences, the miſtakes of believers, the beſt explications of Chriſtianity. Proteſtants ſurely can neither be ſo ignorant of the value of controverſy, nor ſo forgetful how much themſelves have been indebted to it, as ever to diſcourage the proper and prudent uſe of it. Not one of the *different* parties of Chriſtians would *now* have exiſted, nor would *any* have enjoyed the liberty and the profit of friendly debate, but for the bleſſing of controverſy, and for which we cannot be too thankful to God. The *ſerious* Papiſts, indeed, like many *ſerious* Proteſtants in theſe

* Script. Charact. vol. iii. p. 89, or 108.

days, declaimed loudly upon the miſchiefs of controverſy, and earneſtly warned their hearers of the *ſin* of *cavilling*: they failed not to ſet forth the *credit* and *reſpect* due to their men of piety (and ſuch they certainly had amongſt them), and, like Dr. Knox, they knew the *uſe* of crying up the value of *human authority*; and had the reformers liſtened to theſe declamations, theſe warnings, and this ſort of arguments, their followers would have had no *Noſtrums* NOW to maintain by the like pitiful arts.

Dr. Knox intreats all who honour his book with attention, Pref. p. iii, to conſider the *authorities* upon which it is founded, *human* as well as ſcriptural. The word authority is properly applied to the Scriptures; becauſe when the *authenticity* of the Scriptures, the *reality* of the revelation they contain, and the *veracity* of God is ſhewn from his works *, and the undoubted meaning of his word, from a compariſon of the language uſed in different parts of it; the *authority* of the Scriptures, *i. e.* their *claim* to attention, and *right* to obedience, follows of courſe; becauſe theſe Scriptures were made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26. But what are we to underſtand by HUMAN authorities? Are we to underſtand the evidence of *teſtimony* given to eſtabliſh the *truth*, *i. e.* the *reality* of facts? Men have *no* claim to attention, any further than as what they ſay is ſupported by *reaſon*. For if *ſimple* affirmation is to be taken for *argument*, and *piety* for *proof*, which Dr. Knox and many other

* See Eſſay VI.

good

good perſons ſeem much to deſire; as there is much more error than truth in the world, and muſt always be, from the weakneſs and ſcantineſs of the human powers: that *attention* and *inquiry* which, in conſequence of theſe circumſtances, is directed by reaſon and enforced by revelation, 1 Theſſ. v. 21, will be neither of utility nor value. But what is the *nature* of that authority to which Dr. Knox attributes ſo much, and of which near half his book is made up. Upon what ground is this authority to ſtand? Is it to be as much believed in, and as ſlenderly ſupported, as the pope's infallibility? or is it to rely upon the blind reverence and prejudiced veneration of the ignorant, that is, the greateſt part of mankind, to their favourite characters? Is it the opinion of *one* man, or the concurring notions of *many*, which we are to receive for authority? But what if the perſons whoſe authority we are to receive ſhould differ in opinions, muſt we rely on them only where they agree? And how are we to know what their opinions are, unleſs we examine them; and how find out whether they are true or falſe, unleſs we have recourſe to reaſoning? Or if we are to take for authority the opinions of one man, what if he ſhould contradict himſelf? And is it the piety or the abilities of men which is to give weight to their authority, and induce us to receive their notions? And are we to receive them without inquiry? Or, if we ſhould have recourſe to reaſon, will not inquiry and diſcuſſion have a tendency to keep the mind in a very IMMORAL ſuſpenſe, Pref. p. vii, and to divert it from true piety? The church of Rome has always thought

ſo, and therefore eſtabliſhed that ſalutary guard againſt endleſs diſputes—the inquiſition.

What then, are we to take the *ipſe dixit* of men upon account of their ſenſe and piety, *i. e.* their reputation for ſenſe and piety? But theſe qualifications, when men have them, can be no proof of the *truth* of their opinions, becauſe the moſt unqueſtionable poſſeſſion of them is no ſecurity againſt miſtake.

Mr. Hervey was a man of reputation for ſenſe and piety; but will his moſt ſanguine admirers ſay that his writings do not abound with numberleſs matters, either *falſe*, or *unintelligible*, or *unſcriptural?* See W. Ludlam's Eſſays, Eſſay IV. On the Doctrine of Satisfaction.

Mr. Venn was a man of reputation for ſenſe and piety, yet he aſſerts, in conjunction with Mr. Hume, that the law of conſcience is FORMED by the manners and ſentiments of thoſe with whom we are educated, and with whom we converſe. Complete Duty of Man, 2d Edit. p. 82.

Mr. Newton is a man of ſenſe and piety, and he talks of an ordinary and extraordinary revelation, of diſcovering myſteries and ſecrets by the ſenſe of feeling (ſee Eſſays by T. Ludlam, Eſſay III. and IV), matters of which the Scriptures ſay nothing.

Mr. Robinſon is a man of ſenſe and piety, yet he cannot ſee the *difference* between EXPERIENCE and FAITH; or Mr. Joſeph Milner the difference between PARDON and ACQUITTAL. See Four Eſſays by Thomas Ludlam. Nor Mr. Coetlogon the difference between

between MERCY and COMPASSION; ſee his Sermons on the fifty-firſt Pſalm.

The authority of Dr. Knox is perhaps as much to be eſteemed as the authority of any of thoſe numerous writers he has ſo copiouſly quoted, and upon whoſe learning and piety he ſeems to rely ſo much: and he tells us at page 179, and in other places, after the example of many pious authors, that "faith is the gift of God:" and ſo is intuition, demonſtration, analogy, &c. juſt as much the gift of God. For all the ways by which we become acquainted with truth, are no leſs the appointment of God than the form of our bodies or the operation of our ſenſes. But the Doctor, who is a *divine* to be ſure, becauſe he is D. D. and a claſſic without doubt, becauſe he is a ſchool-maſter, has endeavoured to add the *authority* of St. Paul to his own, and when human authority coincides with divine, then indeed the foundation ſtandeth ſure. Unfortunately St. Paul is no dealer in uſeleſs or inſignificant propoſitions; what then would have become of the confidence of thoſe who might chooſe to rely upon the Doctor's claſſical authority? By grace ye are ſaved, ſays the apoſtle, through faith, and that not of yourſelves, IT is the *gift* of God. The word IT is equivocal in the Engliſh language, in which we have no genders to aſcertain the relation of words, and therefore, as a ſcholar, the Doctor ſhould have had recourſe to his Greek Teſtament, and he would have found the word correſponding to IT was TOYTO, which the doctor muſt have known could not refer to πιστις, and conſequently could *not* confirm his aſſertion. But he had a

ſyſtem

ſyſtem to maintain, and then adieu to ſenſe, meaning, context, connexion, grammar, and ſometimes to *common honeſty* *. And is the Doctor the only man of ſenſe and piety whoſe opinions have been either falſe or unintelligible? I tell ye nay. But except ye prove the truth of your aſſertions by the USE of reaſon, and the preciſion of them by the clearneſs of your ideas, it is to no purpoſe, as Mr. Scot of the Lock juſtly obſerves, to back opinions with great names.

Upon what then muſt human authority itſelf rely, if it does not rely upon reaſon? Upon the *perſuaſion* of thoſe who are to furniſh us with it? St. Paul verily thought with himſelf, *i. e.* he was *perſuaded* that he *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus; and he did them out of reſpect to the opinions of ſuch as were eſteemed *ſound* Jewiſh divines: but does he ſhelter himſelf from blame under this argument of authority †? No ſuch matter. He reckons himſelf to have been a blaſphemer ‡, and a perſecutor, and injurious. How ſo? Becauſe he attributed to *human* authority a weight in matters of *religion* which can only belong to reaſon or revelation. Or can human authority reſt more ſecurely upon abſolute conviction? Moſes was perfectly convinced that God had ſpoken to him; did he think proper, therefore, to truſt to his

* When Hervey, in his Vth Dial. p. 153, quotes the Ninth Article, *he* ſays original ſin is the fault of EVERY *man*; that is, of every man *perſonally*. The *article* ſays of every man's *nature*.

† See Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, Vol. II. Serm. vii.

‡ See Eſſay II.

own, *i. e.* to human authority for the reception of his meſſage? By no means. They, ſays he (the Iſraelites), will not believe *me*, upon my *own* authority, nor hearken to my voice, for they will ſay, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee. He knew too well the value of human authority to go with no better a credential. What then are we to think of the Doctor's firm phalanx of ſurrounding authorities Pref. p. iv.?

The NEW TESTAMENT INCLUDES, we are told, ITS OWN EVIDENCE (Pref. p. vii. Edit. 2). But what are we to underſtand by this CAPITAL MAXIM? When books contain abſtract truth, founded upon demonſtration, they may perhaps be fairly ſaid to *include* their own evidence. Euclid's Elements include their own evidence. Newton's Principia may be ſaid to include its own evidence. But does Thucydides, or Livy, or Bruce's Travels, include their own evidence? Or may we ſay the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament include their own evidence? The New Teſtament includes the accounts upon which we believe it to be the word of God (for if it did not it would include nothing), becauſe the relations of the apoſtles were confirmed of God by ſigns, and wonders, and mighty works, to which the apoſtles often appeal, but I do not remember that they ſay one word about this INTERNAL EVIDENCE, of which we hear ſo much; and the reality of theſe ſigns and wonders was confirmed by the evidence of thoſe who ſaw them. But the doctor, and the greater part of the writers he quotes, perceive not the difference between the *proof* of *truth* and the *influence* of opinion. The influence of opinion has

has no more to do with the truth of ſuch opinion, than the colours occaſioned by the jaundiced eye, or a priſm, have to do with the real, *i. e.* the *true* appearance of ſuch objects as are ſeen through them. The influence of opinion, producing correſpondent conduct, ſhews that thoſe who act in conſequence of ſuch opinion, do themſelves believe it, but *belief* is no *proof* of *truth*; and if *firmneſs* of *perſuaſion* was the ſame thing as *certainty* of *knowledge*, the world would be full of *contradictions*, and ALL of them *true*.

All the *knowledge* which men poſſeſs ariſes, either

I. From the relations between ideas exiſting in the mind; or,

II. From information conveyed to it, through the ſenſes.

The only way by which men can ſhew to other men what knowledge themſelves poſſeſs of the *firſt* ſort, is by communicating to them *theſe* ideas which exiſt in *their* minds. For whenever men have the *ſame* ideas, and theſe ideas are clear and diſtinct, the *ſame* relations will appear to intercede between theſe ideas, to every perſon who entertains them: juſt as the *ſenſations* excited by the ſame external objects are *alike* in all mankind. Honey is ſweet, and vinegar ſour to every human taſte; a man is ſeen to go upon two legs, and a mouſe upon four, to every human eye. But you have no way of knowing when men truly repreſent the relations, which *appear* to them to intercede between ideas, but by their communicating thoſe ideas to you; and no way of knowing what ideas they receive from their ſenſes, but by their own teſtimony; and

and this in doubtful caſes is never received, unleſs confirmed by the teſtimony of unqueſtionable and concurring witneſſes, ſhewing that they *alſo* receive the *ſame ideas* from the alledged objects. There is therefore *no weight* in what Dr. Knox calls *authority*, when it relates to the *truth* of opinions, unleſs the maintainers of them enable you to *judge* for yourſelves, and then this authority receives its weight, not from the *aſſertions* of the men, but from the *proofs* they alledge: and there is as little, when it relates to the reality of facts, unleſs it *can* be confirmed by the teſtimony of able and impartial witneſſes, and then the authority receives its weight, not from a ſingle witneſs, but from the numbers, which, if neceſſary, can confirm it. It is aſtoniſhing that men cannot perceive that this wonderful argument of authority, as far as it relates to the truth of *opinions*, cannot poſſibly have any other foundation, nine times in ten, than the prejudices, and the fancies of mankind. Who poſſeſſed a greater influence over the opinions of the world for many ages, than monks and hermits? Who was ſuppoſed to have more learning and piety, than the celebrated Mr. Hutchinſon, yet who pays any regard *now* to his Moſaical ſyſtem? Who is more revered by his followers, or held in higher eſtimation for his *authority* than Baron Swedenbourg? This curious ſupport of truth was formerly in no leſs eſtimation with the papiſts, than it now ſeems to be with certain proteſtants. Dr. K. tells us upon the *authority* of Dr. Townſon, page 144, and he might have joined with it that of Joſeph Milner in his account of Gibbon, page 89, if it would

have

have added any weight to his argument, "that the perſon who enters on the ſtudy of a ſcience, of which he has only a *general* idea (what is it to have a *general* idea of a ſcience?), muſt *receive* many things upon the AUTHORITY of his inſtructors." Does Euclid then enjoin any articles of faith? For whatever a man *receives* upon the authority of another, is *not* knowledge, it is only *faith*. The Doctor may believe there is ſuch a place as Jamaica; but however ſtrong his reaſons for believing it, he cannot *know* it, unleſs he has been there. Does Newton in his Principia enjoin any things to be received upon his *own* authority? Or does Locke take this method of aſcertaining truth? The Doctor quotes the authority of Soame Jennings, at page 157: and Soame Jennings tells us, that "mankind CAME into this world, in a depraved, and corrupted condition: that they are placed here for a while to give them an opportunity to work out their ſalvation; that is, BY a *virtuous* and *pious* life, to purge off that *guilt* and *depravity*, and recover their loſt ſtate of happineſs and *innocence* in a future life:" and he immediately adds, "that mankind are *unable* to accompliſh this purpoſe, for which he ſays they are *expreſsly* placed in this world. Strange to be ſure, that they ſhould be placed here in *order* to *do*, and for the *purpoſe* of *doing*, what they are by no means *able* to *do*! They cannot hope, he ſays, for pardon from their own merits, but only from the merits of Chriſt, and the atonement he made for their tranſgreſſions by his ſufferings and death." But how, then, are they to *purge off* their *guilt* and *depravity* by a *virtuous* and *pious* life?

life? And by what means can guilty perſons *recover* a ſtate of innocence, that is to ſay, be made *never* to have been guilty? So much for Dr. Knox's argument from authority, and Soame Jennings's knowledge of Chriſtianity.

Dr. K. continually ſpeaks as if the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, as they are uſually called, were *generally* denied. Thoſe who believe the Scriptures, cannot ſurely diſbelieve theſe operations, for there is no truth more clearly revealed, nor any which may more eaſily be underſtood, notwithſtanding the eagerneſs of ſome divines to make a myſtery of them, *i. e.* to conſider, and repreſent them as unintelligible, how much ſoever ſo the mode of his extraordinary operations may be. Dr. Barrow, with that acuteneſs of diſcernment peculiar to himſelf, traces the force of the expreſſions employed in deſcribing them, and thus points out the mode, and it may be the variety of theſe ordinary operations, page 74. He ſays nothing, to be ſure, of this INTERNAL EVIDENCE of the truth of the Scriptures. Dr. Watts, indeed, a man of no leſs piety, but far inferior in abilities, ſays, page 117, every TRUE Chriſtian has a *ſufficient* argument, and evidence to ſupport his faith, without being able to prove the authority of any of the canonical books, &c. Now who are TRUE Chriſtians? Are we to eſteem pious and devout men, of all denominations of Chriſtians, TRUE Chriſtians. To be ſure, thoſe who *act* in conſequence of their faith, have, as St. John expreſſes it, the *witneſs in themſelves*; the *witneſs* of *their ſincerity*, of *their deſire* to *obey* God, of the *reality* and the *efficacy* of their

faith, but ſurely *not* of the tenets they believe: for if they had, then Chriſtians of all denominations muſt have a *proof* of the TRUTH of all their *oppoſite*, *contradictory*, and many times, *unintelligible* opinions. Theſe pious perſons (an appellation they ſometimes allow, and ſometimes refuſe to each other), actuated by a zeal, which is much oftener in direct oppoſition, than according to that knowledge of God, which He *plainly* intended men ſhould be *able* to collect, and therefore *certainly* expects they *actually* ſhould collect, from the *nature* of His works, and the *courſe* of His proceedings reſpecting them; uſually make their own *groundleſs* fancies the meaſure by which they eſtimate both the *mode* and the *grounds* of the divine conduct. Without any information from His *works* or His *word*, they preſume He muſt *needs* afford His rational creatures ſuch proofs of the truth of that religion which He thinks proper to eſtabliſh, as are conſonant, not to the *nature* of that goodneſs which he has been pleaſed *actually* to diſplay, but to that which theſe *gracious* perſons think proper to aſſign him. They might juſt as reaſonably have required the giver of all good to beſtow his gifts upon his creatures, in *equal* meaſure; and have judged it proper that he ſhould furniſh every individual with exactly the ſame capacities of body and mind. Alike was that notion of many pious perſons amongſt the Papiſts, that it *became* the divine goodneſs to eſtabliſh an *infallible* decider of controverſy, to prevent *good* Chriſtians from being eternally bewildered in the endleſs mazes of doubtful diſputation. From an abſurd beginning what could

be

be expected but an abſurd concluſion; and thus, though theſe *zealous* perſons agreed in the *neceſſity* of infallibility for the ſupport of the *true* church, they never could agree to what perſons the exerciſe of this valuable gift was entruſted. And thus Dr. Knox's wonderful and valuable argument of human authority, may be equally uſed for the eſtabliſhment of every truth and every error which has ever appeared in the world.

There is, perhaps, a natural tendency in one part of our mental conſtitution to run into a love of myſticiſm, as there ſeems a natural tendency in another to run into a love of the marvellous. This tendency is obſerved in pious perſons of almoſt all religions. There is certainly ſome difficulty in aſcertaining ideas with preciſion, which is as deſirable to prevent controverſy, as it is neceſſary to acquire diſtinct knowledge. Yet much more may be done in this matter than uſually is done. Had Dr. Knox attended to the nature of truth, he would have been able to diſtinguiſh between the *proofs* by which it is to be eſtabliſhed, and the *influence* it was intended to have upon the human mind. For this is the diſtinguiſhing character of rational creatures, by which they are exalted above the beaſts that periſh, that they are endued with *diſcernment* to *ſee* the *truth*, and *judgment* to diſcover its *utility* in the acquiſition of happineſs (without which it would be of no value at all), by its pointing out the conduct proper for this end, and influencing the will to purſue it. And had the Doctor attended to the nature of the Jewiſh, and the Chriſtian diſpenſations, he would

never have fixed upon John vii. 17, as the ground of what he calls the *internal evidence* of Chriſtianity. Becauſe this verſe neither has, nor can have any reference to the *practice* of Chriſtianity. It ſhould always be remembered that our Lord was a Jew, and addreſſed himſelf to Jews. That he meant not to propound to his hearers in general the knowledge of his *own* diſpenſation, but to PREPARE them for the reception of it; and only to acquaint them that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. It was to be the office of his apoſtles to inform them *what* that kingdom was; and for this office they were to be qualified by the Holy Ghoſt. When then Jeſus ſays, if any man will do his will, he means that every *true* and *ſincere* Jew ſhould learn from His preaching, that the doctrine He taught, was *no* doctrine of His *own*, but the doctrine of His Father, whom they called their God, and who had eſtabliſhed the religion they profeſſed: and that by comparing what He taught with the Moſaic diſpenſation and the Jewiſh prophecies, they ſhould know that He was a preacher of the truth, (Eſſay i). In the ſame way he tells them He came not to deſtroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them; and exhorts them to ſearch the (Jewiſh) ſcriptures, becauſe *they teſtified* of HIM; and alſo tells them, that had they *believed* Moſes, they would have BELIEVED Him. For can any one think that Chriſt and His apoſtles, who continually appealed to the external evidence of the goſpel for the proof of its truth, ſhould bid men practiſe it firſt, and promiſe them conviction afterwards: or was it poſſible that Chriſt ſhould exhort

hort his hearers to a compliance with the *diſtinguiſhing* duties of Chriſtianity, when theſe duties had never yet been heard of; *viz.* faith in his atonement, and the ſolemn commemoration of his death?

So long as men have no idea of *preciſe* knowledge, and the ways of acquiring it; ſo long as they have no ſenſe of the neceſſity of clear *ideas*, in order to obtain *diſtinct*, that is any real knowledge, nor *any conception* what it is, to have *ſuch* ideas; ſo long as they appear to have an averſion to them, and a love for confuſion and obſcurity in their notions, we need not wonder at Dr. Knox talking of the HIGH and MYSTERIOUS meaning of *divine unction*, page 219. For what are we to underſtand by a HIGH meaning? And what is it to have a MYSTERIOUS *meaning*? Myſtery means ſomewhat that is *concealed*, and unintelligible *as long* as it continues to be a myſtery. Now what is it to have an *unintelligible meaning*; that is, a meaning that at the ſame time is NO meaning? Much of the ſame ſort, and with which Dr. Knox ſeems equally enraptured, is the MYSTERIOUS COMMERCE of the BELIEVER'S SOUL with the DIVINE SPIRIT, page 166. To be ſure, the *ſouls* of the *prophets* and *apoſtles* had a *myſterious commerce* with the *divine Spirit*; but then they gave *irrefragable* proofs of the REALITY of this commerce, however inexplicable it might be; proofs, which could not be miſtaken for the effects of imagination, and impoſſible to be attributed to it: and when modern believers afford us proofs, *equally* incontrovertible, reaſon will readily acknowledge their claim to it. But while men will combine words which are ſo far

removed from all poſſibility of diſtinct meaning, or indeed of any meaning, what can be expected but all the nonſenſe of myſticiſm in the underſtanding, and all the heat of intemperate zeal in the affections? All this, and much more, is highly acceptable to the common people, and when to nonſenſe in the words, rant in the expreſſions, and vociferation in the elocution is added, it becomes all that common Chriſtians deſire: *populus vult decipi.* All this is wonderfully encouraged by thoſe divines who have as little diſcernment of the only method of acquiring a true knowledge of religion (for ſurely words without meaning can never produce any knowledge at all), as they have of diſtinct meaning. But if men could be perſuaded to adopt the ſame method in attaining religious, as has been employed with ſo much ſucceſs in attaining *phyſical* knowledge. Had they turned their attention to *facts* inſtead of *fancies*, and inquired into the conduct of God, reſpecting the powers, and diſpoſitions He has given to His creatures; and the ſituation in which He has placed them: circumſtances from which *alone* we can collect his CHARACTER and our DUTY, before we can aſcertain the *reality* of ſuch communications, as are *not* made immediately to ourſelves, *i. e.* of tranſmitted revelation: when to *this* knowledge we add the conſideration of the conduct He has *actually* purſued in His intercourſe with His creatures, then, indeed, we place our religion upon a foundation which ſtandeth ſure.

The Bible contains an hiſtory of this intercourſe, and the knowledge revealed in the Chriſtian is fre-

quently conveyed in the language uſed in the Jewiſh Scriptures. Not only metaphors, to be met with in the Old Teſtament, are employed, words uſed *literally* in the *earlier* diſpenſations, are applied metaphorically in the later ones. Thus, to anoint with oil, was the *ſignificant* action * by which perſons or things were *denoted* as ſet apart for ſuch particular purpoſes as God thought proper. When, therefore, St. John ſays (ſpeaking to ſuch as had embraced Chriſtianity), ye have an *unction* from the HOLY ONE, and ye know all things, the apoſtle intends exactly the ſame thing as our Lord does when he ſays to his diſciples, to *you* it is *given* to *know* the myſteries of the kingdom of God. Unto you whom I have choſen, whom I have ſpecially ſet apart, choſen out of the world: and to *this* deſignation their knowledge of the Chriſtian diſpenſation is to be aſcribed. In a like metaphorical way of ſpeaking the word *ſealed* is uſed; and this has alſo been thought to have a *high myſterious* meaning. Seals were uſed as ſecurities to aſcertain the ſure continuance and unchangeable ſtate in which certain matters were preſerved, Dan. vi. 17; Matt. xxvii. 66. So Chriſtians are ſaid to be *ſealed*, to be made *ſecure*, by the Holy Spirit. So Chriſt is ſaid to be ſealed by God the Father: aſcertained in reſpect of his character, for none knoweth who the Son is but the Father. To be ſure, perſons to whom this kind of myſterious religion is acceptable, and they are not a few, will think they have much to lament,

* See Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, Vol. I. Larger Diſcourſe, and Divine Legat. as there quoted.

Cui ſic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus, per vim, MENTIS *gratiſſimus* ERROR.

That Dr. Knox, who is either much averſe, or little able to aſcertain his own meaning, ſhould write with great obſcurity, in common with the whole tribe of myſtics, is not wonderful. At page xii. of his Preface (2d Edit.) he ſays "the underſtanding *uſually* obeys the impulſe of the heart." Does he mean that this is the ſalutary intention of Divine Wiſdom in the conſtitution of the human mind, or the perverſe effect of human folly excited by intemperate and ungoverned deſire? At page 135 he complains that the underſtanding does not ALWAYS determine the will: and this is the common complaint of all the writers of this ſort. External proof, we are told *, will not produce the *efficacious* principle of faith; or, as it is ſometimes put, the *external* publication of religion, the goſpel, ſuppoſe, will not lead any man to the *ſaving* knowledge of God. Dr. Knox goes a ſtep further, and ſays, p. 180, that the written word has NOT efficacy enough *of itſelf* to convince our *underſtandings:* yet he ſays, upon the authority of Dr. G. Ridley, page 42, "that the aſſent we give to the hiſtory of the Goſpel (in conſequence of the conviction of our underſtandings I ſuppoſe, for how otherwiſe can we aſſent to it?) is an acquiſition of our *own*, and NOT a gift; but faith is the gift of God; the *right* faith is not *that* which is *forced* by mathematical demonſtration." FAITH FORCED by mathematical DEMONSTRATION!!!

* Script. Charact. Vol. III. p. 467, or 547.

Dr.

Dr. Knox ſays the outward teſtimony is inſufficient without the inward. Inſufficient for what? For convincing the judgment in order to influence the will? Theſe good perſons, it ſhould ſeem, wiſh that God had made the *influence* of the judgment upon the will as NECESSARY as he has made the perception of the relations between ſuch ideas as are clearly preſented to the mind UNAVOIDABLE. God has given men eyes to ſee, but it is at the hazard of their own perſons whether they will walk blindfold; and He has given them powers to underſtand, and judgment to eſtimate, the value of ſuch truths as are laid before them for the promotion of their happineſs. And in this conſiſts that ſtate of trial in which he has thought proper to place them. Make the influence of their judgments upon the will as NECESSARY as the effects of their perceptive powers when theſe act, and you perfectly deſtroy the moral ſituation. Men become *machines*, and God ceaſes to be a *moral* governor, has no opportunity of exerciſing his rectitude: but it is in the exerciſe of loving kindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs (and for which we have his own word, Jer. ix. 24), that he delighteth. An object, in his eſtimation, more worthy the contemplation of his rational creatures than any other his whole creation can afford.

At page 481, the Doctor ſays, "The Holy Ghoſt *inſpires* conviction." Undoubtedly he does ſo. When our Lord opened the underſtanding of the apoſtles, and when He opened the heart of Lydia, the Holy Spirit inſpired conviction, by *leading* them into the (knowledge of goſpel) truth through the *proper* uſe of

their mental powers: and Paul *proved* the *truth* of his *own* conviction, and contributed to that of the Jews, by *leading* them alſo through that train of reaſoning which had convinced himſelf. But when the apoſtles received the great truths of Chriſtianity by the EXTRAORDINARY operation of the Holy Spirit, they eſtabliſhed the truth of THIS FACT, and of the doctrines thus *miraculouſly* conveyed to them, not by *pointing* out *any* ſteps which *led* to their *own* conviction, and *then* convincing their hearers by ſhewing the *force* of ſuch reaſoning, but by the *teſtimony* of God himſelf, who confirmed their declarations by ſigns, and wonders, and mighty works.

Theſe perſons cannot ſee that the knowledge conveyed to the prophets and apoſtles by the *extraordinary* operations of the Spirit was conveyed independently of the human powers; but that his *ordinary* operations are, and *muſt* be, carried on through the medium of the human powers, unleſs the *nature* of the human mind, and the *ſituation* in which God has thought proper to place men, are to be totally changed. The *different* purpoſes of theſe operations cauſing this manifeſt difference in the *mode* of them. See the former Eſſays, p. 26.

The influence of the Holy Ghoſt, Dr. Knox tells us, is conſolatory: and ſo it certainly is. But to whom? To thoſe only who attend to, and underſtand the truth as it is in Jeſus (ſee Eſſay I). For if, as our Lord aſſures us, the Holy Spirit receiveth of the things pertaining to Jeſus, his aſtoniſhing character and conduct in the amazing ſyſtem of redemption; and

ſhews

ſhews it unto thoſe who are diſpoſed to attend, *i. e.* inclines them to contemplate it; it is impoſſible but ſuch knowledge muſt be conſolatory in the higheſt degree; and the Holy Spirit ſheds abroad his conſolations, as he does the love of (*i. e.* to) God, in the hearts of the faithful, by ſhewing what ſtrong *reaſons* there are for love, what ample ground for comfort.

At page 26, Dr. Knox tells us, the ſanctifying Spirit will *precede*, the illuminating ſpirit *follow*. If we have any ideas to our words, it ſhould ſeem that the *illuminating* ſpirit is that ſpirit which beſtows *information*; and it ſhould likewiſe ſeem that men muſt be made acquainted with their duty *before* they can be *induced* to practice it.

Paper, pens, ink, and printers types, ſays the Doctor, p. 50, *can never* ſuperſede the operation of God. To be ſure not; nor can any thing elſe. But what if God ſhould have appointed theſe as *means* of his operations? Is Dr. Knox a judge of the manner in which it is proper God ſhould conduct his operations? or, muſt God conduct them according to the wiſdom of the Doctor? No perſon doubts but food was appointed for the ſupport and continuance of human life, but does this proviſion ſuperſede the operation of God? Though man cannot live without bread (food), yet we are aſſured he doth not live by bread alone, becauſe it is in God we live, and move, and have our being, how little ſoever we may be able to comprehend it. No perſon doubts but medicine was appointed for the reſtoration of health, but do drugs ſuperſede the operation of God? Every Chriſtian knows

knows that, without the bleſſing of God, phyſic and phyſicians are of no avail; but whether He vouchſafes equal bleſſings to the preſcriptions of an ignorant or a ſkilful phyſician, is another conſideration.

The ſame want of preciſion, or of meaning, prevails through a great part of this work. Writers of this kind are accurately and admirably deſcribed by the poet,

> Who now to ſenſe, and now to nonſenſe leaning,
> Mean not, but blunder round about a meaning.

Perſons acquainted with the powers of the human mind, and the nature of their operations, will ſee that it is not ſo much abſolute error, as *imperfect* knowledge, from whence the miſchief in theſe caſes ariſes. With regard to ſuch as are unable to *ſee* the *force*, and *diſcern* the value and TRUE uſe of reaſon, we cannot do better than obſerve the direction of Divine Wiſdom Matt. vii. 6.

ESSAY VI.

UPON THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL.

By religion I underſtand *right notions, right affections,* and *right conduct,* reſpecting God. By the word God, I mean the Creator, the Governor, and the Preſerver of the univerſe, Heb. iii. 4; i. 2; Col. i. 16, 17; Pſal. cii. 25. Right notions of God can, in *general,* only be collected from the knowledge of His works; right affections can only ſpring from the knowledge of His actions reſpecting his intelligent creatures; and right conduct from the knowledge of His nature as collected from an attention to all theſe circumſtances, or from what He may be pleaſed to diſcover of Himſelf. Religion then, whether exiſting in the mind, or expreſſed in the conduct, muſt have its foundation in thoſe relations which ſubſiſt between the Creator and his rational creatures. *No* moral obligation can exiſt between *unconnected* and *independent* beings.

beings. How far attention to their mutual happineſs *might* induce obligations of *another* ſort between *ſuch* beings, is a different matter. It is from a *ſenſe* of the benefits which God has conferred, and which men have received from Him, Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 25; that *moral* obligation can alone have its origin. But though we can conceive *no other* foundation upon which the obligations to religion *can ſtand*, yet the *nature* of this religion, and the *manner* in which it *ought* to be expreſſed, may, nay muſt, ariſe from very different circumſtances *. To know what *ſort* of religion may be *acceptable* to God †, we muſt know the *divine*, to know what mode of expreſſing it may be *proper* for men we muſt be acquainted with the *human*, character. By the divine character I underſtand the diſpoſitions, will, and intentions of God reſpecting His rational creatures; by the human character I underſtand the various faculties of body and mind which God (his Creator) has given to man. The diſpoſitions of God muſt be collected from his works; that is, *not* from a *ſingle* effect of His power, but from the *conſtant* and *uniform* tenor of His actions. Declarations cannot aſcertain to us His diſpoſitions; for what is to aſcertain to us His veracity? We muſt firſt know that He is a *God* of *truth*, before we can give credit to His *word*. For you cannot prove the *truth* of His declarations from His *aſſumed* veracity, and then back again His *veracity* from the *aſſumed* truth of His declarations.

* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. I.

† Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, Vol. III. Serm. I.

This

This were to argue in a circle, and to take *that* for granted which you profeſs to prove. When Moſes aſſerts the divine veracity, Deut. xxxii. 4, he ſpeaks from his *own* experience. But neither "the experience of the ſaints, or the actions of God recorded in the Old Teſtament (ſee Script. Charact. Vol. II. Chap. xix. 395, or 468), are proofs to us of His veracity, or the immutability of His counſel," *till* the inſpiration and authenticity of thoſe Scriptures is eſtabliſhed. The authority of inſpiration can only ſtand upon the divine veracity: and the authority of Scripture upon its authenticity.

But the divine will and intentions, however made known to us, muſt *accord* to the diſpoſitions of God, as collected from His conduct towards His intelligent creatures. If theſe are at variance, no credit can be given to contradictory information. His will and intentions, in *general*, may appear from that order and conſtitution of things which we call His *natural* government. If any particular caſes appear not intended, or not provided for, in this natural government, our knowledge of theſe extraordinary caſes cannot be collected from His general conduct, that is, His ordinary government, we muſt receive information of them in ſome *other*, that is, in an *extraordinary*, way.

Of this ſort is the FALL of Man: to ſuppoſe this event *intended* by his Creator is to *overturn* the baſis of all religion, is to render the divine character utterly uncertain; upon the *certainty* and *immutability* of which, Mal. iii. 6, religion can *only* ſtand. But to PERMIT ſuch an event, is not only conſiſtent with the character

character of a *moral, i. e.* a righteous, governor; it is *this* very circumſtance which makes the government of God a MORAL government; for a moral government can only be exerciſed over FREE beings. If the actions of any beings are reſtrained by *force*, ſuch beings are not free, they are ſo far incapable of a moral government. As men could alone receive information of the way by which the human race loſt the favour of God from revelation, ſo it is from revelation alone that they can become acquainted with the means by which they may recover it: for we receive knowledge from revelation, which is unattainable by any other way *. By this extraordinary means we become acquainted with events which have taken place in conſequence of what God has thought proper to PERMIT, or to APPOINT. Nor is the difference ſmall †. Such as follow from the (unreſtrained) actions of free beings can only happen by his permiſſion: ſuch events as follow from the exerciſe of his own will muſt be conſidered as of His appointment. Both one and the other have great, and of courſe important, conſequences upon the conduct, and therefore upon the happineſs, of mankind. For God has thought proper to put, from the beginning, their happineſs very much in their own power, their preſent happineſs not a little, their future almoſt wholly ſo. And can there be a ſtronger proof of His benevolence? If, therefore, any come ſhort of the glory of God (what He eſteems

* Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, Vol. II. Serm. V.

† Powell's Diſcourſes, Diſc. VII.

His

His greateſt glory, and what is ſo, if any thing can be ſo, the communication of happineſs), he muſt be juſtified in his conduct, and clear when he is judged.

The motives to God's *general* appointments muſt be diſcernible from the deſign of them; but the *reaſons* for His *particular* appointments, and for His *permiſſions*, cannot be diſcovered by us, unleſs he be pleaſed to *reveal* them. Now He has not thought fit to acquaint us *why* he permitted the Fall: nor *why* He judged proper to obviate much of the ill-effects of it, by *that particular* mode, the incarnation, ſufferings, and death, of His Son. But in what way theſe wonderful events *may* operate (as far as men are concerned), the one to the miſery, the other to the happineſs, of mankind, we may perhaps ſufficiently underſtand, by conſidering the account given of them in Scripture, and alſo the nature of that mental conſtitution our Creator has beſtowed upon us.

In order *clearly* to aſcertain the kind, and fairly to eſtimate the quantity, of the detriment which has accrued to the mental conſtitution of mankind from the Fall, we muſt conſider not only the account given us of this matter in Scripture, but alſo the *general* nature of this conſtitution, and alſo the *peculiar* nature of the ſeveral powers of which this general conſtitution is made up. It is from hence alone we can aſcertain the human character. Both our knowledge then of the divine, and our knowledge of the human, character, can only be collected from EXPERIENCE. We muſt, however, be careful not to take *that* for the human character which has no *right* to *this title*. That alone muſt

muſt be conſidered as the NATURAL character, as that alone muſt be deemed the NATURAL *ſtature* and *ſhape* of mankind, which their Creator *intended* to be ſo. You would not ſay that dwarfs and deformed perſons poſſeſſed the ſize and form *intended* for the human race.

Man is ſent into this world, not with qualifications *already* formed; not provided with faculties, *like* thoſe of the animal creation, ſo conſtituted as to obtain, without further attention, their *appointed* degree of *ſtrength* and *accuracy*. It may be queſtioned, whether even the attainments of many of the human powers, undoubtedly the *inclination* to exert and exerciſe them, and the *degree* of perfection to which they may be carried, depend no leſs upon the care and attention of *other* men to the individual, than upon the care and attention of the *individual* himſelf.

The faculties which God has been pleaſed to beſtow upon the human kind are of a very peculiar ſort; and as different in their nature, from the mental faculties allotted to the animals, as the ſhape and powers allotted to their reſpective bodies. The various qualifications vouchſafed to the animals are beſtowed, if I may ſo ſay, upon *each* ſpecies in exact weight and meaſure. Not only the *quantity*, the *quality* allotted to each ſpecies admits of very little variation *. The moſt conſiderable difference obſervable in the ſame ſpecies, is in the ſize of their bodies; and from what is called the *improvements* made in the breed of animals, it ſhould

* See Preliminary Diſſertation to the firſt Four Eſſays.

ſeem

ſeem that theſe variations are often, if not chiefly, owing to their food and manner of life.

To form an eſtimate, then, of the *moral* and *intellectual* character of mankind, you muſt *not* conſider the *ſtate* in which many individuals *may* be found. What man *can* do, what he *will* do, and what he *does* do, are very different matters. You are not to conſider the ſtate in which man *actually* is, but that to which, by DUE exertions of ſuch powers as God has given him, he *can* arrive. You are no more to meaſure his moral character by that wretched ſtate to which he *can* reduce himſelf (Rom. i.) by idleneſs, inattention, and vicious indulgence in the unreſtrained gratification of his appetites and paſſions, than you are to meaſure his intellectual endowments by the quantity of knowledge he brings into the world along with him; or than you are to eſtimate the attainments he is capable of by the ſtate of arts and ſciences amongſt the Hottentots. Nobody doubts but a horſe was intended by *nature* for the uſe of man; and yet by *nature* he would let no man ride him. Certain divines are, however, eager to ranſack every dark corner of hiſtory for inſtances of atrocious wickedneſs; and to accuſe man of being worſe than a beaſt *, becauſe ſome have been utterly void of natural affection, and others have been given to unnatural luſts; juſt as if we were to take our eſtimate of *nature* from what is *confeſſedly unnatural.*

Under a like partial and prejudiced view of human

* Vigil's Letters.

nature we are told *, "that children diſcover a *proneneſs* to ſin in their earlieſt infancy." This proneneſs to ſin in children, as it is called, as if it was a *fondneſs* for ſin in the *abſtract*, a *deſire* to ſin for ſinning's ſake, is the continual ſubject of much tragical declamation amongſt the Calviniſt writers. But let us hear what an author ſays, who is reported to be inferior to none in piety, and who has a great deal too much ſenſe to call reaſon a poor blind guide †. "Children, ſays Dr. Beattie (Eſſay on Truth, P. i. Ch. ii. S. 8. p. 135. Ed. 6.), while their native ſimplicity remains uncorrupted; while they have no vice (fault) to *diſguiſe*, no puniſhment to *fear*, no artificial ſcheme to promote, do, for the *moſt part*, if not always, ſpeak as they think." And ſo generally is their veracity acknowledged, that it has paſſed into a proverb, "Children and fools ſpeak truth." But proverbs are founded upon *general* views of *ſimple* and *real* nature; not nature *diſguiſed* or *diſtorted* to ſerve a *party* purpoſe, and to prop up a ſyſtem. When our Lord requires in his hearers the ſimplicity, the attention, the docility of little children—is it their *natural* or *acquired* diſpoſitions he means to commend?

Whatever then was man's *original* character, or whatever his ſubſequent *deviation* from it, can alone be known from revelation.——Of the firſt Scripture ſays very little. It ſays that, when creation received its completion from the hand of its all-wiſe and all-

* Script. Charact. Vol. I. 21, or 26.

† Theol. Miſcel. for Sept. 1784, Life of Abraham.

mighty

mighty Creator, every thing in it, as might be expected from the character of ſuch a Creator, was very good. That man placed in a ſtate of happineſs and probation, ſoon forfeited one by not ſubmitting to endure the other. That in conſequence (undoubtedly the *appointed* conſequence) a change of character ſucceeded in Adam: *how far*, or in *what manner*, this change affected his *poſterity*, we are *not clearly* told. It appears that *they* too certainly forfeited the favour of God by their *own* diſobedience, Rom. v. 12. Whether it was diſobedience to the ſame, or to a different command, or in what manner this command was ſignified to them, makes no alteration in the caſe. Sin is not imputed where there is NO *law*, Rom. iv. 15; v. 13; that is, no *poſſible* knowledge of law; becauſe the ſame revelation informs us, 1 John iii. 4, that ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law. But however conciſe the ſcriptural account of the Fall, it is ſufficiently long; and however obſcure, it is ſufficiently clear to anſwer every purpoſe for which it was given: viz. to ſhew our obligations to the Redeemer, and the value of his proffered ſalvation; truths, to be ſure, which may as clearly appear from what Himſelf *did* and *ſuffered*, and from what he delivers repenting and believing ſinners, by His actions and ſufferings. This account indeed, general as it is, ſhews (what to be ſure was not required, either for the benefit of men, or the efficacy of redemption) HOW man came into ſuch a ſtate as to call for this aſtoniſhing diſpenſation; information which we could receive *no other* way, and the want of which proved a matter of unſurmountable difficulty for many

ages in all inquiries into what is called the *origin* of *moral* evil * before the promulgation of the Goſpel. But if this ſubject was involved in impenetrable darkneſs before the light of revelation, it has by no means been ſo clearly underſtood as it might be ſince, for want of *proper* attention. An eagerneſs to ſupport, *not* divine revelation, but *human* explanations of it. Too great a regard for *metaphorical* language, which is *always* more favourable to expoſitors than literal expreſſions, by allowing a latitude to interpretation, to which it is extremely difficult to ſet the *proper* bounds. An attachment to ſyſtems which have been ſuppoſed favourable to piety; and objections to the truths diſcovered to us by revelation, grounded upon *preconceived* notions of the nature and attributes of God, have been the means of hindering mankind from clearly underſtanding ſome of the moſt important truths in Scripture. Thus a celebrated author † begins an elaborate work, intended to explain the effects of the fall, by a *metaphor*, without the leaſt attempt to point out the proper bounds of it, or the preciſe knowledge conveyed by it, and without the leaſt apparent ſuſpicion that it was requiſite ſo to do. The ſame author writes a book upon Free-will, without once telling us what he means by it. Another writer of the ſame ſtamp

* The queſtion concerning the origin of moral evil ſuppoſes the divine *holineſs* eſtabliſhed from a general ſurvey of God's works and providence. It is an inquiry into ſome ſeeming exceptions to this attribute. Take away the character of Holineſs from God, and the inquiry has no meaning.

† Edwards upon Original Sin.

never

never once acquaints us, in a long Eſſay on Juſtification *, what he underſtands by the word. With no more attention to clear meaning, and as little uſe in the promotion of *real* knowledge, an unqueſtionably pious man affirms "that ALL the faculties of the ſoul FEEL the dreadful effects of the original apoſtaſy;" and another concludes, A PRIORI, "that the WHOLE man, in his *intellectual* as well as *animal* frame, has ſuffered by the fall, which operates," as he affirms, "on one part as well as the other, *immediately* and *directly*," and all this without the leaſt inquiry or examination into what the Scripture ſays, from which alone we can receive information upon this ſubject.

Perſuaſion from without occaſioned, we are told, the firſt tranſgreſſion. The incitement to the ſecond is not ſo clearly related. A viſible difference in the acceptance of their reſpective offerings to their Creator, ſtirred up the envy and malevolence of Cain againſt his brother, and the moſt abominable of human crimes followed. We are alſo told, that a change in the ſituation and circumſtances of our firſt parents took place immediately in conſequence of their offence. How far any further change took place in *their* moral character, we are not informed; nor *whether*, or in *what* manner, *their* departure from holineſs occaſioned that wonderful change in the moral character of their immediate deſcendant and his offspring. But the change in Adam's character did not affect the moral character of ALL his immediate deſcendants any more than that of

* Witherſpoon.

Cain did. Enoch was the righteous ſon of a very wicked father, Ezek. xviii. The Scripture tells us, that God ſoon after looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon earth, Gen. vi. 12. *Ways, paths, footſteps, goings*, are metaphorical expreſſions uſed in numberleſs places of Scripture for the *moral* and *religious* conduct of mankind, and for that *only*; juſt as wiſdom in many places does not mean knowledge, but religious diſpoſitions, the attention to, and practice of, our duty to God. If any man lack wiſdom, ſays the apoſtle, let him aſk of God, and it ſhall be given him. Of what wiſdom is the apoſtle here ſpeaking? Why of the wiſdom that is from above (for, to be of *God*, and to be *from above*, in Scripture phraſe, means the ſame thing); this wiſdom, St. James ſays, is firſt pure, then peaceable, &c. But is a knowledge of geometry, or algebra, or phyſic; of future events, or of the grounds and reaſons of God's diſpenſations, firſt pure, then peaceable, &c? Juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints! Is this ſpoken of the aſtoniſhing wiſdom exhibited in the works of creation, or of the loving-kindneſs, and judgment, and righteouſneſs, which God exerciſes towards his creatures, and in which He tells us that He delights?

But though the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament acquaint us, in very expreſs and ſtrong terms, of man's departure from holineſs, they nowhere aſcribe this *change* of character to the ſin of Adam: nor is mention anywhere made, that the intellectual faculties of mankind are diminiſhed either in *ſtrength* or *number* in conſequence

ſequence of the firſt tranſgreſſion. Though this is continually either ſaid, or hinted by certain divines: nor is the corruption ſpoken of in Scripture ever deſcribed as being *independent* of or *unconnected* with the *voluntary* conduct of individuals. St. Paul, after reciting the extreme wickedneſs of the heathen world, does NOT aſcribe it to the ſin of Adam, but to a very *different* cauſe. They did not LIKE, ſays the inſpired apoſtle, to *retain* God in their knowledge, Rom. i. 28; for when they KNEW God they glorified (*i. e.* they worſhipped) him not as God (as the author and giver of all good), and for this cauſe, not for the ſin of Adam, they were given over εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν. The word ἀδόκιμος may, with equal conformity to the genius of the Greek language, be derived from δέχομαι, as from δοκεω (ſee Port-royal Grammar, Book vi. Chap. v. Rule v.), and ἀδόκιμος νοῦς is a mind *diſinclined, indiſpoſed* to receive the truth. The very frequent application of the verb δέχομαι in Scripture to receiving the truth, much confirms this interpretation. So in 1 Cor. ii. 14, it is ſaid the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, the carnal, the ſenſual, the animal man, οὐ δέχεται, *receiveth* not the things of the Spirit of God.

It is very difficult to ſay upon what grounds the tranſlators of the New Teſtament rendered the Greek word ψυχικὸς, 1 Cor. ii. 14, by the Engliſh word *natural*. Certainly not from any attention to clear ideas, or to the Scripture uſe of the word: for ψυχικὸς, with its root ψυχὴ, is always applied to the idea of *animal* life, Levit. xvii. 11; and therefore it is moſt properly rendered, as in James iii. 15, ſenſual, or as it ſhould

be rendered, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44, animal. For though animal and ſpiritual are properly oppoſed in the *literal* ſenſe of the words, and ſenſual and ſpiritual in the *metaphorical* ſenſe, yet *natural* neither is, nor can be contraſted with *ſpiritual*, in either ſignification; becauſe the word nature is *equally* applicable to each *ſort* of being. But further, φυσις, and its derivatives, are alone uſed in Scripture to expreſs the idea of nature naturally, &c. and the *only* meaning we *can* affix to this word, is ſuch a *ſyſtem* of powers, diſpoſitions, qualifications, as God has thought proper to *appoint* to the various beings and matters which He has created: but ſurely the NATURAL man, meaning by this expreſſion the *carnal* mind, which is enmity againſt God, and which neither is nor can be ſubject to His law, cannot poſſibly be of his appointment; certainly not, if we believe the Scriptures, which tell us that God made man upright, and that all *in him* which is not ſo, is of his *own* invention, ſee Rom. i. 28. For if we do not underſtand by the nature of things, *that* nature which their Creator *intended*, and *appointed* they ſhould have, what are we to underſtand by it; or how are we to aſcertain its meaning? But *thus* we find it uſed by the inſpired writers, Rom. i. 26, 27; 2 Peter ii. 12; Jude v. 10. In the ſame way it is uſed for the *appointed* nature of animals, *i. e.* the natural diſpoſitions implanted in them by their Creator, Pſa. xxxii. 9; James iii. 7. And as ψυχη uſually relates to *animal* life, from whence the appetites take their riſe, ſo the word which is uſed when mere exiſtence is intended, without any regard to the mode of

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it, is always ζωη, John v. 26; x. 10; xx. 31; 1 John v. 11, 12; and when life is mentioned with reference to the manner of paſſing it, the word βίος is commonly, if not always, uſed, 1 Tim. ii. 2.; Luke xv. 12; 1 Peter iv. 3.

Nor would this ſtrange miſapplication of the word nature, which we find ſo much in certain divines, ever have prevailed had they attended to the *manner* in which this word has been uſed by St. Paul. He ſpeaks of the Gentiles, Rom. ii. 14, as doing *by nature* (*i. e.* by that nature which God has appointed) the things contained in the law, *i. e.* in the revealed law; and being, in conſequence of *this* nature, *a law* unto *themſelves*. That is, in conſequence of this *natural* law, ariſing from the *conſtitution* God has given them, they followed the *ſame* moral conduct as is preſcribed by the (moral) law of God revealed to the Jews: and he draws *this concluſion* from his own aſſertion, that theſe perſons not having *the* law (the Moſaic law revealed to them as it was to the Jews), are a LAW unto themſelves; and ſhew the work, the operation, the efficacy of *this* law, which is written by nature, *i. e.* by the Author of nature, or (as the apoſtle elſewhere expreſſes it) by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleſhly tables of the heart; and which he alſo calls the LAW of his MIND, that is, of the HUMAN mind. And the work, the operation, the efficacy of this law, which the Gentiles ſhew, exactly reſembles the work, the operation, the efficacy of God's revealed law, inaſmuch as the conſciences of both Jews and Gentiles bear

bear witneſs to their compliance with, or violation of it, their thoughts in the meanwhile accuſing or elſe excuſing their reſpective conduct *. When, therefore, Paul aſſerts, in direct oppoſition to his former affirmation (as it ſhould ſeem), that the Epheſians were by NATURE the children of wrath; by that SAME nature, namely, which God had given them, it is impoſſible to underſtand the word nature in the *ſame* ſenſe in *both* paſſages, unleſs it is poſſible for Scripture to contradict itſelf. The word nature muſt, therefore, of *neceſſity*, be underſtood, in the latter paſſage, in a *figurative* or *metaphorical* ſenſe; and he only means by this expreſſion to point out the very general prevalence of wickedneſs amongſt the Epheſians, even as it alſo prevailed amongſt other heathens; juſt *as if* it was the *appointed law* of their *nature*, Pſa. xxxii. 9. A ſimilar mode of ſpeaking is adopted in all thoſe paſſages which ſpeak of the corruption of mankind as *univerſal*, as if there were not a *ſingle* inſtance to be found of the contrary. As when it is affirmed that ALL *fleſh*, the whole race, *i. e.* all mankind, had corrupted their ways; and that ALL the imaginations of their hearts were ONLY *evil* CONTINUALLY: yet it is aſſerted that Noah was at the very *ſame* time a *juſt* man, and perfect in his generations, and that he *even then* walked with God: and Lot is called *juſt* by St. Peter, though clearly of a mixed character. In the

* Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon III. and the Eſſay upon the Nature and Grounds of Moral Obligation.

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ſame manner the Pſalmiſt ſays of mankind in his own time, of that part of it which were the *choſen* people of God, that there was *none* righteous, *none* that did good, *no* NOT ONE: though he himſelf was the man after God's own heart *, and though he calls himſelf the companion of ALL them that feared God, and kept his commandments, and affirms that all his delight was in the *ſaints*, and the excellent who were on earth. We may obſerve ſomething of the ſame kind in common language. It is not unuſual to ſay of a man who has committed ſome egregious folly, "one would think the man was a *natural* fool," that is, a perſon *born without* underſtanding, without thoſe faculties which are uſually (*i. e.* by nature) vouchſafed to the human race. Though nobody ſuppoſes *this* to be the caſe.

But if the account of the fall in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament is exceedingly general, that given in thoſe of the New is no leſs ſo. Both agree that the alteration in the ſtate of mankind was owing to the conduct of a ſingle perſon. "As by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, ſays St. Paul, ſo death paſſed upon all men," ſo, *i. e.* in like manner as death *paſſed* upon Adam for *his* offence, death *paſſed* upon all men for *their* offences, for that, *i. e.* becauſe *all* have ſinned. That is, death *paſſed* upon *all* men, not for *Adam's* tranſgreſſion, but their own.

* This appellation would ſcarce have been applied to David, had not God approved his character; the *grounds* of the divine approbation are not here inquired into.

And

And the apoſtle magnifies the grace of God accordingly. "The judgment, ſays he, was by one (offence) to condemnation, but the *free gift* is the pardon (and pardon, from the nature of it, muſt be a free gift, not only of that one, but) of many offences to juſtification.

If men, therefore, are in a worſe *moral* ſituation (that is, in a ſtate of more ſevere trial, whether this is owing to an increaſe in the number, or ſtrength of the temptations to evil) in conſequence of Adam's tranſgreſſion, it is not eaſy for us to conceive that this can happen any other way than that men are now either

I. Leſs able to know their duty; or,

II. Leſs willing to attend to it; or,

III. More unable, through the ſolicitations of *wrong* affections, to comply with it.

If men are leſs able to know their duty through a *defect* in, or a *deficiency* of the proper, *i. e.* the requiſite faculties, in conſequence of Adam's tranſgreſſion, this might be their *misfortune*, but could not be charged upon them as a *crime*, unleſs *one* man can deſerve that *another* may be puniſhed. It would, indeed, inſtead of aggravating, extenuate their guilt; as Paul affirms, that he obtained mercy *becauſe* his offences were committed in *ignorance*, 1 Tim. i. 13, although this ignorance was *not* unavoidable. For had he paid as much attention to the prophets as he did to the law, he would probably have ſeen thoſe truths with which he afterwards confounded his brother Jews at Damaſcus. In fact, Scripture *no where* ſays that the

intellectual

intellectual faculties of the human mind are injured by Adam's tranſgreſſion *; and Paul, as was before obſerved, aſcribes the wickedneſs of the Gentile world not

* No account is given us in Scripture of the *powers* or diſpoſitions of Adam's mind. He received the *full* meaſure of his various faculties at *once*, that is, by a miracle; for it was in a manner utterly different from what is the eſtabliſhed order of *that* nature God has thought proper to allot to all his deſcendants; to whom it is appointed to increaſe in wiſdom, as well as ſtature. Our various faculties, it is true, are the gifts of God; yet we receive them not, any more than God's other gifts, in that *ſtate* of ſtrength, accuracy, and perfection, which he intended they ſhould attain. Much is left in every caſe to depend upon human activity, diligence, and attention: the concurrence both of the poſſeſſors and other men is neceſſary to give the various powers of the human body and mind that degree of energy and perfection which they are plainly capable of, and therefore plainly intended to have. Animals poſſeſs their various powers without foreign aſſiſtance; but who can ſay whether the Lord of the Creation would be able even to *ſpeak* or *walk* without much care and attention from his fellow creatures? But not only the powers, that other no leſs important part of our conſtitution, the diſpoſitions of our minds, equally require the attention and aſſiſtance of other men, in order to obtain their moſt advantageous ſtate. The diſpoſitions of the human mind differ, it is true, (See Eſſay VII.) from the intellectual powers no leſs in their *nature* and *character*, than in the *cauſes* which give riſe to them, and the *purpoſes* for which they were intended by our Creator. If the care and attention both of others and ourſelves is requiſite to *increaſe* the *ſtrength* and *activity*, and to *give direction* to the diſcerning faculties of the mind, the like care and attention is equally requiſite to *reſtrain* the prevalence of theſe diſpoſitions, and to regulate their uſual impetuoſity. If not brought into the world along with us, they increaſe with our powers of ſenſation, and ſoon attain, of *themſelves* as it were, a degree of ſtrength which, by being permitted

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not to want of ability, which is not in men's own power, but to want of *will*, which is. See Eſſay II. of the former ſet, page 27.

Had the writers upon this ſubject attended to the *nature* of the human faculties, the *manner* of their operation, and the *purpoſes* they were *plainly* intended to anſwer: had they conſidered the mode in which moral government can alone be exerciſed, and the *ends* for which men are placed in this life, they never could have written ſo much of what is either falſe or unintelligible. A little reflection would have ſhewn them, that the faculties God has given to mankind, are not beſtowed upon them *ſuddenly*, at *once*, or in their *full* ſtrength; but are communicated, as it were, *ſlowly*, and *by degrees*; and receive that perfection they are capable of, by the *repeated* attention and exerciſe of him who poſſeſſes them. But attention and exerciſe are *labour*, and labour is painful, and of courſe offenſive. Hence mankind are with difficulty brought to employ that attention and exerciſe in the cultivation and improvement of the ſeveral powers God has given them, and which are requiſite to render theſe powers as uſeful to them as they are capable of being, and as they were deſigned to be, by Him who gave them: hence

to remain unreſtrained, ſoon becomes hurtful to the individual, and all about him; and which, therefore, makes *diſcipline* as neceſſary in reſpect of the *diſpoſitions*, as cultivation and exerciſe are with reſpect to the *active* powers. The affections and paſſions are leſs ſubject to our wills, and more dependent upon cauſes *without* the mind, and are more connected with our *immediate ſenſations*.

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it happens that God's great gift of REASON, which was intended to ſet man *ſo far* above the beaſts that periſh, does it in the *generality* to ſo ſmall a degree. The ſame averſion to labour produces a ſimilar effect reſpecting the happineſs of another life, which depends juſt as much upon the cultivation of the human *diſpoſitions*, as the happineſs of the preſent life does upon the cultivation of the human *powers*. But this is by no means the *whole* of the difficulty in the latter caſe. For the human diſpoſitions *naturally* get into a worſe, and more ungovernable ſtate, from want of attention, and ſelf-government. The human *powers* can remain, as it were, *dormant* and *inactive*, but the human diſpoſitions, being generally excited by cauſes *independent* of the will, are more *frequently* and more *violently* ſtirred up. Many of the human appetites are neceſſary to the continuance of our being; and the *removal* of the uneaſineſs occaſioned by their ſolicitations, is not only pleaſant in *itſelf*; the *mode* by which this ſolicitation is relieved produces *additional* pleaſure, and creates a deſire of further gratification, and becomes a motive for *unneceſſary* indulgence: and the *natural* inclination for pleaſing ſenſations, conſpiring with the increaſed demand, occaſioned by cuſtomary compliances, and repeated indulgence, makes *reſtraint* offenſive, and *denial* almoſt impoſſible. The dictates, therefore, of reaſon, and the commands of religion, which are hoſtile to unlimited indulgence, are liſtened to with difficulty, and often diſregarded: and hence the *uſe* and *propriety* of God's revealing *thoſe ſanctions* which human reaſon is unable to diſcover; and which, *when* diſcovered, the

the human underſtanding is ſo averſe to attend to, and the human will to apply. By the help of *this* diſcovery two more powerful affections, fear and hope, are called in to aid the weaker diſpoſitions of the human mind; nor are even *theſe* able to operate, in many caſes, with ſufficient force, unleſs God *ſo open* the human heart that men are diſpoſed to attend to the great objects of them, Acts xvi. 14; Pſalm cxix. 32. O. Tr.

Now this conſtitution of human creatures ſhews in *what* manner our preſent ſtate is fitted to be, what both reaſon * and revelation † ſhew it was intended to be, a ſtate of TRIAL, and *alſo* of PROBATION; *i. e.* a ſtate to diſcover men's internal diſpoſitions, and likewiſe to fit them, by *experience* and *exerciſe*, to *govern* theſe diſpoſitions: a matter that may be as neceſſary for the happineſs of ſuch intelligent beings as are *not* intended for *ſolitary* exiſtence, as any we can conceive; and it may be, that intelligence itſelf may diſqualify beings who poſſeſs it for ſuch a ſtate; may make it inconſiſtent with happineſs in general, or with *that* degree of it their benevolent Creator intended for them. And thus we ſee how men may be under a neceſſity, for the ſake of their own happineſs, to reſtrain within due bounds ſuch parts of that conſtitution which God has thought proper to give them, and may alſo be tempted to tranſgreſs His commands, without that *unnatural*, unſcriptural, and abſurd ſuppoſition of certain divines,

* Butler's Analogy, Part I. Chap. iv.

† Deut. viii. 2; Exod. xvi. 4.

that

that men *love* ſin for ſinning's ſake, that they are *deſirous* of offending their Maker, and have an *innate* tendency to diſobedience, a *natural* pleaſure in what is wrong, and are *delighted* with guilt; or elſe that they are created without powers to know, or to receive information of their duty. Hence we are continually told that men are ſtark blind, that there is either no ſuch thing as conſcience *, or that it is totally deſtroyed †, and that men are now abſolutely and literally unable to underſtand what the Lord requires of them, and perfectly ignorant of their duty to God, until He by a miracle is pleaſed to give them a knowledge of it; by a miracle I ſay, that is, not according to the *general* conſtitution of things which He has appointed, but to beſtow this benefit upon ſome *particular* perſons, without any reaſon or motives for this His particular determination: and this effect, not of reaſon, but of whim and caprice, for *ſuch* it muſt be deemed, if we are to receive *that* account of *this matter* which *they* are *pleaſed* to call an ELECTION of GRACE (ſee the 4th of the former ESSAYS). That God has more than once determined to purſue a particular *ſort* of conduct, cannot be doubted (for if he does purſue *any*, that very purſuit will make it particular); and the very meaning of the word determination, implies choice, election, the exerciſe of the will: and he has alſo more than once thought proper to aſſign his reaſons; and we may, therefore, conclude that He acts from reaſons, and thoſe both wiſe and

* Newton's writings, paſſim. † Venn.

good, when He has *not* thought proper to aſſign any. Thus in the moſt important event in which men are concerned, the atonement for ſinners, there can be no doubt but God had the wiſeſt reaſons for this very wonderful part of this very wonderful diſpenſation, although He has not thought proper to reveal them, notwithſtanding the extreme eagerneſs of the ancient ſchool-men and our modern divines to find them out; and notwithſtanding their fooliſh contradictions to each other (ſee the 4th of the former ESSAYS, page 110), and that utter confuſion of ideas which muſt neceſſarily take place where men have not one ray of information to direct them. Had theſe zealous perſons abode by the directions of that Scripture they ſo much cry up and ſo little underſtand, they would have acted a wiſer part.

Hence too we may collect *how far*, and in *what* manner, *other* intelligent beings may be able to *affect* our moral ſtate, and *influence* our moral diſpoſitions. For both the aſſiſtance and the oppoſition of *this* ſort, which we are taught (in Scripture) to expect, has been much miſunderſtood, and not a little miſrepreſented. Other beings can alone affect, or change our character, through the inſtrumentality of our *natural* conſtitution, and *conſequently* with the concurrence of our OWN will. For could force or fraud be applied, which we were unable to withſtand or detect, our ſituation would be totally changed.

But it is continually ſuppoſed, and aſſerted by a claſs of writers, that the very frequent mention in Scripture of the exceeding darkneſs of men's minds,

and their exceſſive ignorance, *implies* and *betrays* a *want* of abilities to underſtand the nature of, and the motives to their duty.

In order to aſcertain how far ſuch ſuppoſitions are *juſtifiable*, and ſuch aſſertions *true*, we muſt conſider the nature of the ignorance mentioned in Scripture.

Now we may obſerve that the *miraculous* information vouchſafed to mankind by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, is in Scripture language uſually called LIGHT. But light is not the object *ſeen*, it is the *means* or medium by which other objects, intended to be the ſubjects of knowledge, are rendered viſible. By the oppoſite metaphor, the *ignorance* of the heathen world is in Scripture uſually called DARKNESS; by which is alſo implied, not a want of power to underſtand, but a *concealment* of the matter to be underſtood. When, therefore, THIS *matter* was proclaimed by the preaching of the goſpel, the Scripture language is, "the people that walked in *darkneſs* have ſeen a great *light*, and upon the nations that ſat in *darkneſs* hath the *light* ſhined:" conſonant to this mode of ſpeaking, the knowledge of ſalvation is called the *day-ſpring* from on high, Luke i. 78, and our Lord the great and original author of it, John i. 9; viii. 12; ix. 5, the *light* of the world; and Mal. iv. 2. the ſun of righteouſneſs: and the deſign of this goſpel is repreſented to be that of turning men from darkneſs to light, Acts xxvi. 18. This light is always ſpoken of as a great miracle; and this wonderful diſpenſation as being *far beyond* the *reach* of the *human faculties*: a knowledge *impoſſible* for men to attain by the power of their *natural* abilities. It is

called the myſtery which God *expreſsly* hid from ages and generations; and it was in the wiſdom of God that the world by natural wiſdom knew *not* God; that is, as their REDEEMER, and their SANCTIFIER; for they *did know* him as their CREATOR and BENEFACTOR, Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 26; Rom. i. 21. The want of *abilities* to diſcover, or of *deſire* to know this hidden purpoſe of GRACE, is *never* objected to mankind as a *crime*: nor, with reſpect to this *ſupernatural* information, are men ever ſaid to love darkneſs rather than light, until life and immortality were miraculouſly brought to light by the goſpel; and this goſpel was fully and explicitly declared unto all nations, Rom. xvi. 26, by thoſe who had miraculouſly received it. But after this miraculous information was fully and explicitly declared to the world at large, THEN men's *inattention* to it, and *unwillingneſs* to RECEIVE ſo beneficial a truth, ſuch glad tidings of great joy to every conſiderate perſon, was expreſſed by *another* metaphor, viz. that of BLINDNESS. This important truth being no longer *purpoſely* concealed, the obſtructions to the knowledge of it were of *another* ſort, and Scripture now ſpeaks as if it was *impoſſible* that any could reject or neglect ſo valuable and important an offer, who was not *abſolutely* unable to comprehend it. And when *this* ignorance is ſpoken of under the metaphorical appellation of *blindneſs*, an appellation *never* applied to men's ignorance of divine myſteries, it is *always* ſpoken of as *criminal*. How is it then that *one* ſpecies of ignorance is *free* from blame, while the other is conſidered as highly criminal? The reaſon

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is plain: *unavoidable* ignorance, that is, an *impoſſibility* of acquiring knowledge, cannot JUSTLY be made the ground of guilt. Actions, to be guilty, muſt not only be wrong in themſelves; they muſt be *voluntary*: but before they can be voluntary, they muſt be poſſible. If, then, the latter ſpecies of ignorance is criminal, it muſt be voluntary; and if it is voluntary, the knowledge *required* of men is attainable by the cuſtomary uſe of their natural faculties; for if it is NOT ſo attainable, the want of it cannot be voluntary. Therefore it is not an *inability* to know, but an unwillingneſs to attend, which is to be removed. Now attention is no more a *diſpoſition* of the mind, than directing the eyes to any object is *ſeeing*, or liſtening is *hearing*. It is an *act* of the mind, juſt as conſideration and judgment are, and, like all other acts of the mind, the *ſubject* and *conſequence* of CHOICE. Can it be proper to call attention a diſpoſition, when we ſpeak of men as *diſpoſed* or *indiſpoſed* to attention? But call it what you will, to diſpoſe men to attention, is the work of the Holy Spirit, Acts xvi. 14.

Nor can it be ſaid, as has been ſaid (in order to ſhew that men are unable to attain, by the cuſtomary uſe of their natural faculties, ſuch knowledge as is required of them), that they have *deſtroyed* theſe faculties*:

* Thoſe who affirm that men have deſtroyed their moral faculties, muſt, of courſe, deny the *exiſtence* of the LAW, or RELIGION of NATURE. For *this* law, or *this* religion, ariſes out of the relations interceding between intelligent creatures and their Creator, and *appeals* to theſe faculties for the *reality* and *rectitude* of its obligations.

though to corrupt is one thing, and to deſtroy another: for the *Scriptures affirm* that they have NOT deſtroyed theſe faculties. They are the *blind* people who *have* eyes, and the *deaf* people who *have* ears, Iſaiah xliii. 8. Even eyes to SEE, and ears to HEAR, Ezek. vi. 9. They are repreſented as *cloſing* their eyes, NOT as *putting* them out, Matt. xiii. 15; Acts xxviii. 27; as *ſtopping* their ears, as *unwilling*, NOT *unable* to hear, Pſalm lviii. 4, 5. Alluſive to this diſpoſition of mankind is that remarkable admonition of our Lord repeated no leſs than fourteen times * in the New Teſtament, "He that hath *ears to hear*, let him hear. Now it is one thing to corrupt, *i. e.* to render the mental powers *leſs* fit for the uſes intended by the giver of theſe powers, and quite another thing to forbear applying, *i. e.* making uſe of them.

To ſpeak, then, of the corruption of human nature, or the depravity of it, is to ſpeak a language perfectly intelligible, as intelligible as it is to ſpeak of the improvement of it. For both the *degree*, and the *application* of the human powers are made dependant upon the human will, which receives its impulſe and direction from the human deſires; and theſe are excited by the *proſpect* of agreeable ſenſations. But God has ſo conſtituted the world, that *preſent* pleaſure may be productive of future miſery. For without ſuch a conſtitution, it would not have been what He has thought proper to make it, a STATE of TRIAL: and as *preſent* ſenſations act more powerfully upon the mind

* Butler's Sermons, Edit. 4. page 376.

than

than *future* apprehenſions of either *good* or *evil*, men are often carried away by the more powerful impulſe; and this impulſe is increaſed by the additional force which *cuſtomary* gratification gives to the deſires. For what we call *habits*, whether good or bad, ſpring from repeated action; a principle *implanted* in our *nature*, and to which we are indebted for almoſt all the benefits of exiſtence; though, like every other principle in our nature, liable to be made the occaſion of evil to us. But when men ſpeak of the NATURAL *corruption* of the human conſtitution, they charge the Author of nature (if they have any meaning to their words) with all the evils he *permits*, as if they were of his expreſs APPOINTMENT. And to aſk why he permits them, is to aſk why he created beings endued with liberty and intelligence? And to make this a ſubject of *complaint*, is to complain of his putting the happineſs of human creatures in their own power.

ESSAY VII.

UPON

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE POWERS AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE HUMAN MIND.

WHOEVER conſiders the nature of our mental conſtitution, will find that the different faculties beſtowed upon it by its Creator vary not more in the *mode* of their reſpective operations, than in the *degree* of power over theſe operations which is given to the poſſeſſor of theſe faculties, and in the *ſtrength* and *activity* in which theſe faculties ſubſiſt in different individuals *.

The exertion, and the *continuance* of that exertion, *i. e.* the *exerciſe* of *many* of the human faculties, de-

* The *directive* power of the *will* over the operations of ſome of the mental faculties ſeems to be *ſuſpended* during that ſtate we call SLEEP; as appears from the *deſultory* changes in the imagination in dreams: theſe are *irregular, unconnected, ſudden,* and *inconſiſtent*: and *hence* we are enabled to *diſtinguiſh dreams* from *reality* when we *awake*.

pend

pend upon the determinations of the human will. The external motions of the body—the uſe of *ſome* of the ſenſes—the application of the intellectual faculties to their *appropriate* objects—what may be called our ACTIVE powers, are all of this ſort. The *ſenſations* of the body—the *diſpoſitions* of the mind—what may more properly be called our PASSIVE faculties, depend *wholly* upon the influence of *external* objects. Theſe ſenſations cannot exiſt, nor theſe diſpoſitions obtain, at the *mere* will of him who perceives them: they ariſe, and *can only* ariſe from *external* action. As far as the exerciſe of our various powers depends upon the *will*—as far as *this* exerciſe contributes to that general happineſs, which appears to be the intention and deſign of our Creator—as far as the *energy*, *i. e.* the ſtrength and activity of ſuch powers, depend upon our cultivation and exerciſe of them—ſo far we are under a *moral* obligation to exerciſe and improve (*i. e.* to increaſe the energy of) them. For though the *original* poſſeſſion of our faculties does *not* depend upon our will, yet if the *energy* of them does depend upon our will, we are under a *moral* obligation to contribute *all* in our power to carry them to the *utmoſt* perfection they are capable of. For the ſame reaſons which ſhew that we *ought* to uſe them, ſhew that we *ought* to uſe them *as much* as poſſible.

Neither the human reaſon (*i. e.* the intellectual faculties), nor the human will, have any *direct* concern in exciting the various *diſpoſitions* of the human mind. Men cannot love or hate, be ſorrowful or joyful, without the *appropriate* objects of theſe affections: and

theſe

theſe appropriate objects preſent themſelves much oftener from the intentions and actions of *other* beings, than from our *own*. The powers of the human underſtanding may lead men to *regulate* or *reſtrain* that conduct which theſe affections prompt them to purſue, but it is the characteriſtic of moſt of the affections that they riſe not from *ſlow* and ſerious conſideration, but from *ſudden* and *unforeſeen* perceptions; and with much greater ſtrength from the active and vivid *impreſſions* of ſenſe, than from the leſs vigorous and leſs lively ſuggeſtions of the imagination, according to that of the poet:

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa, &c.

It is, beſides, often neceſſary for the preſervation of the individual, that ſome affections ſhould riſe *inſtantaneouſly*. The effects of attention and conſideration require a time inconſiſtent with the rapidity of that inſtantaneous exertion for which theſe affections were implanted in us: accordingly they are not only ready enough to riſe in all their ſtrength upon the appearance of their *proper* objects; they wait for *no other* ſignal, but are inſtantly prepared to execute the parts allotted to them in the œconomy of nature. But not only the activity, the ſtrength alſo of their exertions is regulated, *not* by the WILL, but *wholly* by the apprehended intereſt of the individual: and the *degree* of this intereſt often alters the *nature* of the affection. A man on board a ſinking ſhip is affected, *not* by *compaſſion* for his unhappy companions, but by *fear* for himſelf,

himſelf, and probably would purchaſe his *own* eſcape at the riſque, or perhaps even by the deſtruction of *all the reſt*. Not ſo a ſpectator in perfect ſafety; compaſſion would urge him to ſeek for, and to lend *general* aſſiſtance. It is not reaſon that leads us to be afraid of, and to avoid, imminent danger; it is a fear implanted in us by our Maker. A much more active and powerful motive, and intended ſo to be for wiſe purpoſes. And as the exiſtence, *i. e.* the proviſion of theſe affections is built upon the *intereſt* of the individual, there is nothing *morally* wrong in him who feels *more acutely* for the loſs of a little finger *, than for all thoſe who periſh in a great battle in Germany, by an earthquake in Italy, or the plague in Turkey; becauſe neither reaſon nor revelation command a man to love his neighbour MORE than himſelf. The *primary* objects of moſt of the affections are the loſs or acquiſition of happineſs to the *individual*, or to ſuch as he eſteems parts of himſelf, from the neceſſary impulſe of other affections: and there is nothing more of *moral* rectitude or depravity in the *mere action* of our affections, than in the uſe of our eyes or ears, or in the exerciſe of our other bodily ſenſes.

But juſt as, in the former caſe, men may wilfully or careleſsly *neglect* or *refuſe* to exerciſe, cultivate, and improve their intellectual faculties; ſo, in the preſent, they may *neglect*, exactly in the *ſame* way, to attend to, regard, and conſider, the *objects* of theſe ſeveral diſ-

* Wilberforce's View, p. 105.

poſitions;

poſitions; and this neglect is equally blamable in both caſes. It is to excite theſe affections in *degree*, or to direct them in the *application*, that our Lord ſays, in reſpect to one of them, "Thou ſhalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c." A command that would have been as impoſſible as uſeleſs, unleſs the *goodneſs* of God TO US had made him the *proper* object of this affection. And, with reſpect to *another* diſpoſition, "Fear not thoſe who can only kill the body." A command whoſe whole weight lies in the *unlimited power* of God, without which he could not have been the *ſupreme* object of this affection. And it is the great want of attending to that vaſt *variety* of circumſtances, which make the Redeemer ſuch a tranſcendent object of our love, that renders the generality of mankind ſo exceedingly blamable in their want of attention and affection to Jeſus. Hence that pathetic complaint of GOD himſelf, uttered in all the forcible ſimplicity of the tendereſt affection, "The ox *knoweth his* owner, and the aſs his *maſter's* crib; but *Iſrael* doth *not* know, MY people doth NOT CONSIDER." Amongſt created beings love only is the ſource of love; but the Redeemer's love ſprung from a more exalted and illuſtrious principle, of which we have very faint conceptions; a deſire to promote the happineſs of thoſe who are deſervedly offenſive to us (for while we were enemies, &c.), and of promoting it at every poſſible expenſe: for if we only love them who love us, what thank have we? NOT *ſuch* was the love of Jeſus. And this unſpeakable

able love is held out to us as a moſt powerful reaſon, the moſt powerful it may be that we are capable of conceiving, why *we*, in *our* meaſure, ſhould be perfect, even as our Father and our Creator which is in heaven is perfect.

Thus then, though there can be nothing *morally* right or wrong in the *mere* action of the affections (becauſe the ideas of right and wrong regard only the *determinations* of the *will*), yet there may be *much ſo* reſpecting the *degree* or the *application* of theſe affections, becauſe *theſe* circumſtances *do depend* upon the *will*.

As far as different things can become *objects* of our affections, and as far as compariſons may be inſtituted between the reſpective *values* of ſuch objects; *i. e.* between their capacity to promote happineſs; *ſo far* we may, and ought, to exerciſe our judgment upon them: and it is our *duty*, as well as our *intereſt*, to exerciſe our judgment in ſuch caſes; becauſe it appears to be the *intention* of our *Creator* that we ſhould do ſo: yet this eſtimate is a matter of *mere* judgment, and ſubject to all the imperfections of human judgment, whether ariſing from want of *original* diſcernment, or the acceſſion of adventitious obſcurity.

As far, then, as the different faculties of the human conſtitution are under the direction of the *will*, ſo far they are the ſubjects of the MORAL SENSE. For it is the *determinations* of the *will* ALONE which are the objects of this particular faculty. Actions, intentions,

intentions, and character, as denoting a courſe of conduct, ALL manifeſtly depending upon the WILL, are the *proper* and ONLY objects of *Moral* Judgment. See an Eſſay upon the Nature and Grounds of Moral Obligation.

ESSAY

ESSAY VIII.

UPON

THE NATURE AND GROUNDS OF MORAL OBLIGATION; IN WHICH DR. PALEY'S NOTION OF THE MORAL SENSE, ADVANCED IN HIS LECTURES UPON MORALITY, IS FULLY CONSIDERED.

DR. PALEY appears desirous of drawing up a system of morality for the use of such persons as are either unable or unwilling to think for themselves (Preface to his Lectures upon Morality, p. v). In consequence he speaks slightly of what he calls disquisitions to settle *terms* and *phrases*, and dwelling upon elementary and verbal distinctions, ib. p. i. vi. vii. If he means to include, in his censure, the ascertaining ideas with *precision*, he will soon find, that unless this is done, and done with great care, he will never be able to communicate knowledge upon *any* subject, or to any persons whatsoever, whether capable of thinking or not. The subject of all knowledge is the relations between ideas, and unless the original ideas

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are *clear* and *diſtinct*, it is impoſſible the relations between theſe ideas can be *clearly* and *diſtinctly* perceived. If this is not a ſelf-evident truth, it certainly admits of *no* proof. A couple of inſtances from the Doctor's own book may ſerve to ſettle the matter.

In his Preface, page iv, he quotes Dr. Johnſon, affirming that "when the obligations of morality are taught, the ſanctions of Chriſtianity ſhould never be forgotten; becauſe by attending to theſe ſanctions *they* (*i. e.* morality and Chriſtianity) will give ſtrength and luſtre to each other: for thus *religion* will appear to be the *voice* of REASON, and *morality* the WILL of God."

By morality we mean the will of God as far as it can be collected from the *nature* and *courſe* of His works. By religion we mean the will of God as far as it is made known to us by *revelation*, *i. e.* by ſupernatural means. Revelation informs us of *many* facts, and it informs us of the *conſequences* or *effects* of *theſe* facts: effects which no human reaſon could diſcover. Such facts are thoſe of the incarnation, crucifixion, and reſurrection of Jeſus. The conſequences, or the effects, of theſe facts, are the various benefits men *may* receive from this wonderful diſpenſation. This, I take it, is Chriſtianity. Are we then to ſay, that morality gives ſtrength and luſtre to the atonement of our Lord—to the forgiveneſs of our ſins, which we receive through faith in his blood, &c.? And are we to aſſert that this atonement of our Lord—this forgiveneſs of ſins, the aids of the Holy Spirit, and admiſſion into

heaven, together with the poſitive inſtitutions of religion, baptiſm, and the ſupper of the Lord, *appear* to be the *voice* of REASON. But the ſanctions of Chriſtianity enforce the *duties* of morality. They do ſo, and *ſo far* they undoubtedly ſhew that the will of God collected from his works, and communicated in his word, *agree*. And ſo FAR alſo theſe *ſanctions* ſhew the *importance* of *moral* duties. Nor need we wonder at finding a reſemblance between moral duties and Chriſtian graces, ſince both proceed from the ſame author; but to aſſert that *Chriſtianity* is the *voice* of *reaſon*, is ſurely to miſrepreſent it not a little.

The Doctor ſays, p. 52, that when he "firſt turned his thoughts to moral ſpeculations, an air of *myſtery* ſeemed to hang over the whole ſubject." And how has he cleared up this myſterious matter? Why by telling us, that obligation is *nothing* more than an inducement of *ſufficient* ſtrength. Of ſtrength ſufficient for what? Sufficient, I ſuppoſe, to engage a man to act. When, therefore, a man is *not* induced to act, is he under *no* obligation? Does the obligation *ceaſe* to be one becauſe it is inſufficient? Is it *null* and *invalid*, becauſe it is *inefficacious?* The Doctor ſeems to think it neceſſary to the exiſtence of obligation, that it ſhould prevail, and produce a correſponding conduct; and that the *reality* of it depends upon its efficacy: for otherwiſe why talk of its being a *violent* motive? of its having ſufficient ſtrength? When a man does not comply with his obligations we uſually ſay, he *violates*

them: but, according to the Doctor, he *cannot* violate them unleſs he ACTS in direct oppoſition to them.

According to the Doctor's formal definition of obligation, p. 51, "It is a *violent* motive reſulting from the *command* of another." Now, Firſt, Unleſs the perſon iſſuing ſuch command has power to enforce it, this inducement may not have *ſufficient* ſtrength; and therefore obligation cannot *neceſſarily* ariſe from the *mere command* of another.——But,

Secondly, Such motive cannot *neceſſarily* produce *moral* obligation. For a command may order and enforce an *immoral* action: but neither is *this* the whole of the difficulty. For ſuppoſing the *motive* to be the moſt *violent* we are capable of conceiving; ſuppoſe it reſulted from the command of Omnipotence, requiring inſtant obedience, under the immediate penalty of endleſs and inconceivable pain, would any one allow ſuch a ſituation to be a ſituation of *trial*, or obedience in this caſe to be any proof of the poſſeſſion of the *moral* principle, or, which is the ſame thing, *ſuch* obedience to be *moral* obedience? But if the obedience is not *moral*, neither can the obligation be *moral* obligation; for it is the *morality* of the obligation which makes obedience our DUTY. The motives to action may be ſo ſtrong as to leave no room for attention to the rectitude of the action; juſt as proofs may be ſo forcible as to leave no room for exhibiting the *integrity*, i. e. the fairneſs and honeſty of our judgments; yet bleſſed are they who have *not* ſeen, and yet have

believed: more bleſſed our Lord certainly meant, though not poſſeſſed of clearer conviction.

Biſhop Warburton ſeems not to have attended to this ſubject with his uſual acuteneſs. He ſays, Divine Leg. book i. ſect. 4. that obligation *neceſſarily* implies an *obliger*. It might perhaps have been ſaid with equal reaſon, that obligation neceſſarily implies (to coin a word) an *obligee*. A confuſed and obſcure notion of *compulſion*, ſeems with many writers to enter into their idea of obligation. An idea utterly inconſiſtent with the nature and ſituation of ſuch beings as are the ſubjects of obligation. Free beings are alone capable of obligation, and beings endued with the *moral* ſenſe are alone capable of *moral* obligation. Take away liberty, and you inſtantly take away reſponſibility, which conſtitutes the moral ſituation, and of courſe all moral government: for, notwithſtanding the wiſdom of the ſchool-men, and of ſome of their followers amongſt our modern divines, the very idea of *moral* government is, that it is *conditional*. Where compulſion takes place there is an end of moral government and obligation together. Nobody talks of the obligation of malefactors to continue in jail; though ſome perſons have improperly, and unintelligibly enough, talked of their obligation to ſuffer puniſhment. If there is not power enough *ſomewhere* to puniſh them, they are no longer anſwerable for their crimes. Becauſe what can be the benefit of *their* puniſhment if (as muſt be the caſe under the preſent ſuppoſition) they muſt inflict it upon themſelves.

A ſtate of trial means ſuch a ſtate as will ſhew by what *ſort* of motives intelligent beings will be governed. It not only excludes therefore abſolute compulſion, but even ſuch motives as approach ſo near to it as ſcarce to be diſcernible from it. The ideas of right and wrong, of moral rectitude and depravity, ariſe out of the *relations* interceding between intelligent beings. They reſpect the intentions of ſuch beings with regard to the happineſs of each other. If theſe ideas are applied to *actions*, it is only ſo far as actions are a *teſt* of intentions; and *theſe* ideas ariſe as *naturally*, and as *neceſſarily* from the conſideration of *theſe relations*, as the ideas of proportion between quantities, ariſe from conſidering the relations between correſponding magnitudes; or as the ideas of equality ariſe from conſidering the relations between the radii of the ſame circle, or between the areas of triangles upon the ſame baſe, and of the ſame altitude. And now we may be able to anſwer a queſtion by which the Doctor, at page 48, ſeems not a little fearful, to uſe his own words, of being NON-PLUSSED, viz. Why am I obliged to do what is right? Had his idea of obligation been clear, he would have perceived, that God has ſo conſtituted the human mind, that it does, and muſt perceive this obligation, whenever it perceives *what* is right—or rather, that this very perception *creates* the obligation.

It is in conſequence of this notion of the neceſſity of an *obliger* that many perſons have, with equal obſcurity, and confuſion of ideas, placed the *ground* of

moral

moral obligation upon the WILL of God: and they might with equal wiſdom have aſſigned the *ſame* ground to prudential obligation. For if we conſider God as the author of thoſe *relations*, and that *ſtate* of things which give riſe to theſe obligations, we may, to be ſure, attribute them to the divine will, juſt as the actions of men which ſpring from the powers and diſpoſitions which He has given them (though perhaps abuſed or miſapplied), have been attributed to the ſame cauſe, Iſaiah xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6. But if we ſuppoſe that the knowledge of *right* and *wrong depends* upon our *knowledge* of the *divine will*, this, I apprehend, will be found a very different matter.

The will of God may either be made known to men by *immediate* revelation from Himſelf, *i. e.* by inſpiration; but in what manner the *reality* of inſpiration may be aſcertained to the receivers of it, ſo as to make it diſtinguiſhable from human *fancy*, no man can tell: God has condeſcended to prove the reality of His own revelations by a requeſted miracle, Judg. vi, 37. 39. Or the divine will may be communicated by thoſe who have received it *immediately* from God to other men, exactly in the *ſame* way by which *any other* knowledge is conveyed; and in this caſe the *authority* of it muſt ſtand in *ſuch* atteſtations of its reality as God ſhall think fit to give, Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4; Acts ii. 43; v. 12; xv. 12; xix. 11. Or, laſtly, the will of God may be left to be collected from the nature and courſe of His works and government; and in this caſe we muſt FIRST know *what* is *right* and *what wrong*, BEFORE we

can aſcribe events to God, Gen. xviii. 25. And it is upon the *ſame* ground that men muſt try the Spirits whether they be of God; *i. e.* human reaſon muſt judge not only of the *authenticity*, but of the *reality* of original revelation. For whatever external demonſtration of power may be given in atteſtation of the *reality* (I do not ſay of the truth) of a revelation, unleſs this revelation carries with it alſo the internal demonſtration of its divine original, *viz.* its *perfect conſonancy* to the character of the Creator as diſcoverable from his works, it cannot be received. For though there ſhould be Gods many and Lords many, yet TO US HE ONLY WHO BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD.

The Heathens were no ſtrangers to *moral* obligation. Tully wrote a book profeſſedly De Officiis. Did he mean only to treat of *commands?* Of *violent*, or indeed of any motives reſulting from commands alone.

Virtue, ſays Doctor Paley, is doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the ſake of *everlaſting* happineſs.—The Heathens, then, were incapable of virtue. They could NOT promote the good of mankind for the *ſake* of everlaſting happineſs, becauſe *life* and *immortality* were FIRST brought to light by the goſpel. Nor does this ſolution go to the bottom of the queſtion, as the Doctor affirms. For *antecedent* to revelation men muſt know what is *right*, and what *wrong*, before they can tell what is the will of God; and ſo thought the apoſtle. For he ſays when

when the Gentiles, which have not the (revealed) law, do by NATURE (*i. e.* in conſequence of thoſe faculties, diſcriminating between right and wrong, and which God gave them for this purpoſe) the things contained in the (revealed) law; theſe having not the law (having not the benefit of revelation), are a law unto themſelves; and ſhew the *work*, the operation, the efficacy of this law which is written in their hearts, their conſcience συμμαρτυρουσης; witneſſing together *with*; together with what? Why with their *ſenſe* of the obligation of this natural law, and with their own reaſonings upon the ſubject (ſee Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, vol. i. Sermon iii.) to the rectitude of its deciſions: for a ſenſe of our obligations to *obey* a law, and a ſenſe of the conduct ſuch law requires, are very different matters.

When, then, it is objected to the authority of the moral ſenſe, that its deciſions are utterly uncertain, becauſe many unjuſt, cruel, and abominable practices have obtained, and were therefore *approved* by a large portion of mankind, the argument has no force; you might juſt as well argue, that becauſe a large portion of mankind took their deities from amongſt ſtocks and ſtones, and four-footed beaſts and creeping things, therefore the whole race were unable to diſcover the TRUE GOD: although He left not Himſelf without a witneſs, Acts xiv. 17; becauſe the *inviſible* things of God may be CLEARLY *ſeen*, being underſtood by the things that are made, Romans i. 20. The deſign of the moral ſenſe is not to ſhew what *particular* actions are *right* and what wrong, but to ſhew what *ſorts* of actions

actions are *right* or *wrong:* to ſhew that there is a real difference between the *ideas* of right and wrong, *independent* of all other conſiderations: that neither utility, however *general*, nor the will of God, however *clearly* made *known* to us, can enter into this idea. Becauſe prior to the promotion of general utility, you muſt know that it is *right to promote general utility*; and prior to obedience to the will of God, you muſt know that it is *right to obey the will of God.* The determination what *particular* actions are right, and what wrong, is foreign to the province of the moral ſenſe. It is ſufficient for all the purpoſes intended by it, if it clearly ſhews that a regard to truth, juſtice, and goodneſs, is more excellent than the violation of them: the inquiry whether particular actions do, or do not come under theſe general heads, is quite a different conſideration. Moral obligation can be founded only upon the *rectitude* of the conduct to be purſued. This perception of right and wrong, in the principle, producing human actions, is attended with eſteem and reverence for the agent in one caſe, with abhorrence and deteſtation in the contrary. But *ſimple* diſpoſitions of mind are not the only conſequences of this perception. It carries with it the force of a law, and men condemn the tranſgreſſors of it, whether themſelves or others, as *deſerving* puniſhment. It is this very ſingular *ſenſation*, this *judicial* determination which accompanies this perception, and *no* other that conſtitutes it a *moral* perception. Obligation, then, means only a ſtate of mind perceiving the reaſons for acting, or forbearing to act. If theſe reaſons are taken from the

the utility of the action to the actor, the obligation is only prudential, and the violation of it implies folly; and this may be followed by the appointed conſequence of folly, *i. e.* miſchief. But if the reaſons are taken from the *rectitude*, or *depravity* of the action, the obligation is *moral*, and the violation of ſuch obligation implies GUILT and puniſhment, *i. e.* evil *intentionally* inflicted upon *this* account, may be expected as the conſequence.

This peculiar conſtitution of the human mind is the declaration both of our Creator's diſpoſitions and His will; and ſo the apoſtle underſtood it to be: "Foraſmuch then," ſays he, "as we are the offspring of God, we *ought not* to think the Godhead is *like* unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and man's device;" but (we ought to think) that He reſembles his creatures in thoſe wonderful faculties of mind which He has plainly given them. For, unleſs you admit a reſemblance in *kind* between the faculties of the divine and thoſe of the human mind (however ſuperior in degree thoſe of God may be), you cannot ſhew that *any* revelation received through the *intervention* of men comes from God; and therefore cannot aſcertain the authenticity, nor, of courſe, the authority, of His commands. For miracles are no evidence that the worker of them is ſent from God. All they prove is, that he who works them is poſſeſſed of more than human power. But ſince we know nothing at all of the capacities of beings ſuperior to men, and are equally ignorant of their diſpoſitions and characters, it may therefore be that ſome malevolent being abuſes the

the weakneſs and credulity of mankind. Such a ſuppoſition can only be *effectually* confuted by ſhewing that the revelation in queſtion is agreeable to the character of God as diſcoverable from his works. For, ſhould the immediate author of it be only a ſubordinate being, he is undoubtedly one who acts under the authority of the Supreme. Nor is the goodneſs of God, *as diſcoverable* in the works of creation, a *ſufficient*, or indeed *any*, confutation of ſuch a ſuppoſition, becauſe this goodneſs admits a great mixture of evil; and, till the *reality* of revelation is aſcertained, no ſatisfactory account can be given of this matter. See Eſſay upon the Fall, p. 84, note *, upon the origin of moral evil.

We may further obſerve, that the *general* determinations of the moral ſenſe are ſuch as can neither be denied nor diſputed by thoſe whoſe deciſions in particular caſes have been ever ſo oppoſite to it: it will, indeed, be found exceedingly difficult to quote any inſtances which have not been founded upon the *apparent* expediency, rather than the *pretended* rectitude, of them.

When we ſpeak of *right*, as a quality of intentions or actions, in oppoſition to *wrong:* and when we ſpeak of the right (*i. e.* a claim) men have to certain things, the ideas are intirely different. By the firſt, we mean a certain ſenſation or judgment of the mind; by the ſecond, a juſt claim to the poſſeſſion of certain things, or the performance of certain actions. By a *juſt* claim, we mean a claim that may be *enforced, ſupported*, and *vindicated, without* guilt. To enforce, is to *procure*. To ſupport, is to *defend*. To vindicate,

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is to *enſure* the *exerciſe* of ſuch right. What guilt is, every man muſt collect from the conſtitution of his own mind. But guilt has only to do with the commiſſion, *not* with the conſequences, of crimes. We are told indeed, p. 68 and 70, that the *miſchievous conſequences* of an action, and the *guilt* of ſuch action, may be reckoned the SAME thing. The guilt of human actions relates ſolely to God. But can any human actions be miſchievous to Him? If thou ſinneſt, what doeſt thou againſt God? or if thy tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doeſt thou unto Him? And what is the miſchief to mankind of thoſe ſins which, it may be, are only objects of deſire, under an utter impoſſibility of proceeding even to intention? When David committed adultery and murder, he ſays to God, "Againſt thee ONLY have I *ſinned.*" Men may deny having ſuch ideas, and diſown feeling ſuch ſenſations, and no man can prove or diſprove the reality of human perceptions and human feelings; but, ſurely, were not theſe ideas and theſe feelings common to all mankind, we ſhould not find words expreſſive of them in EVERY language.

Writers upon moral ſubjects find it difficult to avoid theſe words, which we are told have *no* meaning, *i. e. no* ideas annexed to them. We are forced to have recourſe to them in the definition of human rights. A right, we ſay, is a juſt claim to the *poſſeſſion* of ſome thing, or the *performance* of ſome action. The value of the right enters not into the idea of the *wrong* ariſing from the violation of it, any more than it does

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into the idea of the *guilt* of this violation. Nor does the ſecurity of the rights of others enter into the idea of the *juſtice* of preſerving rights inviolate. If you aſk, What is the foundation of human rights? I anſwer, the WILL of God clearly made known. Both the powers men are poſſeſſed of, and the various beings round them, are his gifts: and it is to be *preſumed* that He intended ALL ſhould have the benefit of them, under thoſe laws which the nature and conſtitution of things that He has eſtabliſhed plainly point out. To ſay that it is *advantageous* for men to have the benefit of God's gifts, is a trifling, if not an identical, propoſition. To ſay that it is RIGHT they ſhould have this benefit, and WRONG that they ſhould be deprived of it, is an important truth, and a truth that moſt perſons would aſſent to. It is from this manifeſt intention of God that the violation of human rights involves guilt in His ſight, for no two ideas are more diſtinct than guilt and injury: nor can *any other* reaſon be given why injury to the property of our fellow-creatures, and cruelty to their perſons, ſhould be criminal in the ſight of God. Nobody doubts but that cruelty to the animal world is *wrong*, though no intereſt of mankind ſhould ſuffer by it; nay, though their gratifications, as has been ſuppoſed, ſhould be increaſed by it. Unleſs you will ſay it tends to the diminution of the tender feelings. But is not this to go a great way for reaſons?

Has it not the appearance of a contradiction, to affirm that general *utility* is the baſis of *moral* obligation?

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That obligation, ſurely, is *alone moral* which is built upon *moral* conſiderations, *i. e.* upon the rectitude or depravity of the action.

If univerſal utility is to be the *diſcriminating* mark of *right* and *wrong*, we ſhall often find the human underſtanding unable to diſcern, and human experience too ſcanty to decide, whether certain modes of acting are *generally* uſeful or not. Many perſons have thought, that to promote the common good of mankind, trade and commerce ſhould be perfectly freed from *every* reſtraint. Yet has this unlimited liberty of trade never been permitted in any nation whatſoever. Many perſons have thought confinement for debt injurious to the *general* welfare; yet has this ſuppoſed injurious practice never been wholly aboliſhed in any country. It is not conſiſtent with the will of God, we are told, page 74, to ſend an *unfortunate* debtor to jail. Will there not be ſome difficulty in diſcovering *what* is the *will* of God reſpecting this point? and more, perhaps, in determining who are, and who are not, *unfortunate debtors*.

The reaſon for prohibiting or puniſhing an action (it is ſaid page 68) will always be in *proportion* to the miſchief which would ariſe from ſuffering ſuch action to go unpuniſhed. Are all actions, then, *innocent* from which *no miſchief* ariſes to mankind? What ſhall we ſay of the neglect of the poſitive inſtitutions of Chriſtianity. The Doctor fully ſets forth the great and numerous miſchiefs of fornication: but has it ever been puniſhed, in any country, in *proportion* to theſe miſchiefs?

chiefs? But though this *may* be a *good*, and *muſt* be a *general* rule in *human* puniſhments, becauſe the end of human puniſhments is the ſafety of civil ſociety: yet we know far too little of the divine government, to ſay that this, or any thing of this ſort, is either the *meaſure* or the *end* of *divine* puniſhments.

The Scriptures preſuppoſe, in the perſons they ſpeak to, a knowledge of the general principles of moral conduct, page 7. It would be in vain to apply to your Bible for diſtinct notions of juſtice, mercy, compaſſion, benevolence, &c. What then are we to underſtand by the holineſs of God? Is this attribute to be conſidered only as a regard to the production of happineſs, and an averſion to the production of miſery? Is it the benevolence of God the angels mean to celebrate, when with united acclamations they repeatedly hail Him, Holy! Holy! Holy! It is ſurely his inflexible rectitude, his unchangeable love of righteouſneſs, Pſal. xi. 7; xxxiii. 5; Jer. ix. 24. And is not this rectitude aſcribed to God becauſe, poſſeſſed of all wiſdom to diſcern his ends, and all poſſible power to compaſs them, He can have no *imaginable* motive to deviate from holineſs, *no poſſible* temptation to evil.

We may now be able to diſcern the difference between what have been ſometimes confounded together (ſee the Acknowledgment to Correſpondents in the Britiſh Critic for May 1798), namely, the conſcience, or, as it is often called, the Moral Senſe, and the Law of Nature. By the Law of Nature, or the Religion

ligion of Nature, I underſtand the will of God collected from His *works*, or from the *courſe* of them. The conſcience, or the moral ſenſe, are faculties of the human mind, and, however indicative, certainly conſtitute no part of the divine will. And, therefore, thoſe who deny the exiſtence of the law of nature, or the religion of nature, do not *neceſſarily* deny the exiſtence of conſcience, or of the moral ſenſe.

THE END.

Lately publiſhed,

FOUR ESSAYS,

ON THE

ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT;

ON

THE APPLICATION OF EXPERIENCE TO RELIGION;

AND ON

ENTHUSIASM AND FANATICISM.

To which is prefixed

A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION,

ON THE NATURE OF CLEAR IDEAS

AND THE ADVANTAGE OF DISTINCT KNOWLEDGE.

In theſe Eſſays

THE NATURE OF THE OPINIONS MAINTAINED,
THE JUSTNESS OF THE REASONING EMPLOYED,
AND THE PROPRIETY OF THE LANGUAGE ADOPTED,
IN THE SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS OF

THE REV. THOMAS ROBINSON,

ARE FULLY CONSIDERED.

BY THOMAS LUDLAM, A. M.
Rector of Foſton, Leiceſterſhire.

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